The Great and Precious PROMISES, OF GOD:

Some Sermons concerning the Promiſes, and the right application thereof:

Whereunto are added ſome other concerning the uſefulneſs of Faith, in advancing Sanctification:

As alſo, three more concerning the Faith of Aſſurance.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Glaſgow*.

All being reviſed ſince his death by ſome friends. The laſt Impreſſion carefully corrected and amended.

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe Promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of GOD.*

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To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

Although (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been kept back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Press from other things; yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and give the Reader such advertisement as we conceive necessary concerning the one, as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose; only we find some help is offered unto thee in three most weighty and concerning Points of Christian Religion. 1. how by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises. 2. How by Faith thou may advance the

work of Sanctification. And 3. How thy Faith may grow up unto Aſſurance. Of all which we may truly ſay, that nothing can more ſeaſonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the ſouls of the Lords people in theſe times.

O how neceſſary is it in ſuch troubleſome days, to learn how through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promiſes: *and now when our ſtrong corruption hath (in a manner) neceſſitat the wiſe Phyſician to mix unto us ſo bitter a Cup, and give ſo ſtrong a Potion, in what a fainting and ſwouning condition muſt we be, if* by the two immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to lye, *we receive not alſo* the ſtrong conſolation. *Again when profanity and ungodlineſs hath ſo abounded in theſe Nations, that* from the top of the head to the ſole of the foot, there is no ſoundneſs, but wounds aud bruiſes, and putrifying ſores. *And when the corruption of the time, like* the ſons of Zeruiah, *are grown too ſtrong even for the* Davids *who are amongſt us; what ſhould we ſtudy with more earneſtneſs, than to purify* your hearts by

by faith, and *by* having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? 3. *When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even* forgot prosperity, *and the multiplied changes and revolutions in our days, hath so clearly demonstrat the instability of all sublunary glory, and so convincingly taught us, that this is* not our rest, *undoubtedly, it is a time to* look for a City that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, *the subject then is useful.*

As to the matter of handling it; it is true, much accuracy and neatness is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleanings of a Church-Writer, and as to liveliness and power, though it be as easy to draw a Picture with the heat and motion of a living man, as to write or print these lively motions of the spirit, which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching, and in an eminent measure were also let out upon this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seri-

ously & feelingly ſpoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore ſpake: *Yea the conceptions and expreſſions ſavouring much of an exerciſed ſpirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it ſelf, but even thirſting alſo and panting for the ſalvation of others nay, (in ſome me ſure)* travelling in birth till Chriſt might be formed in them. *O that more of this holy zeal and fervency, might accompany this great meaſure of light and knowledge in the myſteries of the Goſpel, that the Lord hath graciouſly beſtowed both on Paſtors and People in this generation, that once again we might ſee (as in the days of* John Baptiſt) the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. *And that the bleſſed Spirit by the ſame gracious operations, may ſo warm and enlarge thy ſoul in the uſe of this and all other means for thy eternal Salvation, is, and ſhall be the ſincere deſire of,*

Thy Servants for Chriſts ſake,

Robert Trail, John Stirling.

GREAT

Great and Precious.

PROMISES.

SERMON. I.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

MAy we not truely say, that if ever the Christians who live in these days shall be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shal inherit everlasting life, all these that are now before his Throne, may lay aside their harps and give us leave to sing? Will it not be a mystery, suppose ye, unto heavenly *Enoch* that spent so much of his time in communion and followship with God, when he shal behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corrisponding with God? Will it not be a mystery unto believing *Abraham*, when he shal behold such mis-believers, such disputers of the promises of God; advanced to reign with Christ? will it not be a mystery unto wrestling *Jacob*, when he shal behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Princes to wrestle with God, till they did prevail; Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shal behold such impatient Christians as we have been, entering into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when

he ſhal behold ſuch unmortified Chriſtians entering within that City, into which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a myſtery unto tender *Joſiah*, to behold ſuch Chriſtians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a ſtone within us, entering into heaven? Will it not be a myſtery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold ſuch hypocritical Chriſtians, as the moſt part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to ſee thoſe that have been clothed with hypocriſie and guile, now clothed with the robes of immortal glory? And will it not be a myſtery unto ſelf denied *Paul*, when he ſhal behold ſo proud and ſelfiſh Chriſtians enter into heaven? Give me leave to ſay this, go where we will, we ſhal be matchleſs and ſingular; for if we ſhal go into eternity of pain, we ſhal be the greateſt debtors unto the infinit juſtice of God, in regard of mercies we have received: and if we ſhal enter into eternity of joy, we ſhal be the greateſt debtors unto the ſpotleſs grace of Chriſt, in regard of mercy we have abuſed. There ſhal be none in heaven like to us, and if we ſhal go to hell, there ſhal be few there that may be conmpared unto us. And let me but add thus further before I come to the words, go where we will, we ſhal be out of doubt with our condition: within a ſhort time we ſhal be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a hypocrite ſhal be depreſſed below the reach of his faith, and one that is groſly in nature, he ſhal be abaſed beyond the reach of his preſumption: a Chriſtian ere long ſhal misbelieve no more, a hypocrite ere long ſhal believe no more; and one that is groſly in nature, ſhal ere long preſume no more: there is no misbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor preſumption of well-being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to ſpeak to, we told you when we firſt began our diſcourſe upon that precious and exalted grace of Faith under a twofold notion and conſideration Firſt as it is juſtifying. And ſecondly, as it is ſanctifying. For the firſt, we reſolved to ſpeak to it in a two-fold conſideration; Firſt. As it cloſeth with Chriſt ſimply

as the object upon which it resteth, and of this we have spoken from that place, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. Secondly, As it closeth with Christ as held forth in the promises. And now being to speak of it in this consideration, we have made choise of this place, in which these things concerning the Promise, shortly; 1. Ye have that fountain and spring from whence the promises do flow, holden forth in the first words of the verse, *whereby*, or as the words may be more fitly rendered) *by whom* relating unto Jesus Christ, who is original and spring of all Promises.

2. The properties of the Promises, and these are. 1. The freedom of the promises, held forth in that word, *given*, whereby *are given*, which speaketh this, that the promises are free gifts, flowing only from good pleasure. 2. Their unchangeablesse, and that is holden forth in the word *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are *exceeding great*, and the promises are called great, either in respect of that price that was laid down to purchase the promises; or they are called great in respect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are *precious*; Now the promises are called precious, either in respect of their original, that they come from precious Christ; or else in respect of this, that they are the object, (I mean the object *quo*, or by which) of *precious* Faith, as it is called in the first verse of this Chapter, or else they are precious, because they are things that a Christian ought to put an high account upon. For the word that is rendered precious, may likeways be rendered honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promises.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantages of the promises: *By them we are made partakers of the divine nature.* Now this is not to be understood of any essential conversion of our substance into the substance of God, but of a Christian having the divine vertues of Jesus Christ impressed upon his soul, and expressed [illegible] life and conversation.

And there is this laſtly, concerning the promiſes in the words, even the time when the promiſes are eminently accompliſhed; it is, *when we have eſcaped*, or as the word is, *when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through luſt*; That is the time when a Chriſtian meeteth with the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

Now before we can ſpeak to any of theſe, we muſt ſpeak a little unto ſome things, as neceſſary to be known in order to the better underſtanding of all. 1 We ſhal not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a promiſe, We conceive it a glorious diſcovery of the good will of God towards ſinners; and withal, a purpoſe and Intendment, (and if we may ſay) an engagement to beſtow ſome ſpiritual or temporal good upon them, or to withold ſome ſpiritual and temporal evil from them: And certain it is, that in this deſcription of the promiſe, there is a divine harmony betwixt mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteouſneſs and Peace, they kiſs one another. Neither ſhal we ſtand long to point out the diſtinction of the promiſes. 1. There are ſome promiſes that are conditional, and there are ſome promiſes that are abſolute: abſolute promiſes are theſe that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; ſuch a promiſe as is that, that God will deſtroy the world no more by water, that is an abſolute promiſe: ſuch a promiſe was that of God ſending his Son into the world, that was an abſolute promiſe; and ſuch is that promiſe of converſion, in giving of the heart of fleſh, it is an abſolute promiſe. As for the conditional promiſes, they are theſe that do require ſome condition to be performed by the Chriſtian before the accompliſhent of the promiſe, ſuch as that promiſe of ſalvation is, requireth believing as going before it, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved:* And pardon, it is promiſed unto a Chriſtian upon repentance, and yet we confeſs that there is not a conditional promiſe that is in all the Covenant of Grace, but it may be reduced into an abſolute promiſe, in regard that the thing promiſed (in the conditional promiſe) is in abſolute free gift, and the condition of the promiſe

promiſe is another. 2. There are ſome promiſes that are temporal, and ſom that are ſpiritual; temporal promiſes are theſe, that promiſe ſome temporal thing unto a Chriſtian; and ſpiritual promiſes are theſe, that promiſe the beſtowing of ſome thing that is of everlaſting concernment. 3. There are ſome promiſes that are not accompliſhed in this life, ſuch as this, *That we ſhall ſee him as he is, and ſhall be made like unto him*: But for the promiſes of Faith and Juſtification, theſe are accompliſhed in this life. 4. There are ſome promiſes that are extraordinary, and there are ſome promiſes that are common: Extraordinary promiſes are theſe, that are given to ſome particular Believers, as a ſingular priviledge, ſuch was the promiſe that was given to *Abraham*, in his *ſeed ſhould all the families of the earth be bleſſed*: and that promiſe that was given to *Rebekah*, *that the elder ſhould ſerve the younger*: As for common promiſes, they are theſe, that every believer in Chriſt hath a right to make uſe of.

Neither ſhal we ſtand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes: it is clear from *Pſalm* 62. 8. *Truſt in him at all times, ye people.* And it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witneſſes recorded of in *Heb.* 11. that ſpent their days in embracing of the the promiſes. But, 7. We would have you conſider, that it is more eaſie for a Chriſtian believer to believe ſpiritual promiſes, than to believe temporal promiſes: it is eaſier to truſt Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, than to truſt him for our daily food, when we are redacted unto ſtraits. And the grounds upon which we aſſert this, may be theſe; 1. Becauſe it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe that Chriſts death reacheth for the purchaſing of temporal promiſes, which more eaſily he taketh up in ſpiritual promiſes: for a Chriſtian can hardly believe that ſuch a thing was in Chriſts intention, as to die for his dayly food, which is moſt certain, it we conſider it is a ſpecial mercy. 2, In a Chriſtians believing of ſpiritual

ritual promises, there is often some sense and reason that helpeth him to the exercise of faith, at least, they press not the contrary; but to believe a temporal promise when a Christian is redacted unto a strait, and that he can see no outgate present, sense and reason stands upon the top of his faith, and presseth him to despair, As for instance, when a Christian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to sup at night to believe that there is a promise upon which he may rest, that he shal not want his food? but that the Lord have service for him, he will provide here, he hath not only reason to disput against it, but the strong pincing sense of hunger, both crying out, *How can bread be given in the wilderness?* 3. The temptations that assaults a Christian, to misbelieve upon temporal promises, they are more subtile and more connatural to a Christian, than his temptations that assault him in resting upon the spiritual promises, when a Christian is in straits in the world, the temptations that hinder his exercise of faith, they are more consonant to flesh and blood, we are ready to yield to misbelief then, because we think it is rational and speaketh the truth. 4. A Christian is often so afrighted by his daily failings or some particular more gross outbreakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord shal make out these promises which concern his eternal salvation, and so do him good in the latter end; yet he may be sadly perplexed and distrustful, in making use of any particular temporary promise, for drawing forth any comfort or incouragement there from, as to this present exigent; because he knoweth although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet he may take vengeance on their inventions, *Psal.* 99. 8. and therefore may punish his present failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is also much of a natural and carnal self-love to a present life, remaining in the best, that we are many times worse to satisfie in our securities for the things

of this life, than that which is to come; and can more eaſily truſt the Lord for our ſouls, than for our bodies; ſo that though his naked word will ſometime ſatisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the laſt ground of it may be with a Chriſtians unacquaintedneſs, with that lot of exerciſing Faith upon temporal promiſes, there being many who think not that there is uſe for Faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his Faith upon theſe more difficult, than upon promiſes that are ſpiritual: And this may appear moſt clearly, in that we find men more eaſily bear their ſpiritual wants, (even a Chriſtian that is moſt exerciſed) than they bear their temporal wants: and more corruption and impatience doth ariſe from temporal want, than from ſpiritual want.

2. Conſider, that all a Chriſtians duties are turned over into promiſes: there is not a duty that is required of a Chriſtian, but it is converted into a promiſe. Is not Faith a duty, in 1 John 3. 23 *This is his Commandment, that ye ſhould believe*? And is not that turned over into a promiſe, in Jer. 3. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father*? The word importeth, not only an act of neceſſity, but of violence, thou ſhalt do it. And in the 13 of *Zachary* at the cloſe, *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father*. And ſo in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortification a Chriſtians duty, Col. 3. *Mortifie therefore your members*; and it is turned over in a promiſe, *Jer.* 32. 28. and *Ezek.* 36. 29. where he promiſeth, that he will purge away all their uncleanneſs. And it is moſt clear, from *Mic.* 7. 16. *I will ſubdue* (ſaith he) *all thine iniquities*: it is not ſaid, *thou muſt ſubdue them*, but *I will do it*. Is not the knowledge of God a commanded duty? And yet it is turned over into a promiſe, in the Covenant of Grace. *They ſhal know me from the higheſt to the loweſt, neither ſhall there be need any more, that one ſhould ſay, know the Lord, for they ſhall be taught of me*. Is not the commandment of fear your duty, as it is clear from *Eccl.* 12. 13. and yet that is likewiſe turned over in a promiſe, *I will put my fear in*

their inward part, that they shall not depart away from me. So tenderness is a Christians duty, and yet is turned over in a promise: *I will take away their heart of stone, and give them an heart of flesh.* And that I may say no more of this, look but to these four places, and there ye will see almost all duties turned over in promises; there is *Jer.* 31. *Jer.* 32. *Ezek* 11. and *Ezek* 36. ye will see all the duties of the Covenant converted into promises. But may not some say, what advantage is there of this? Much certainly, every way that duties are turned over into promises: it may give a Christian hope, that he will once perform these duties. Will ye not once be tender? Yes certainly; because your tenderness lieth within a promise. Will ye not once be much in the exercise of fear? No doubt ye will; and the ground of it is this, because your fear lieth within a promise, and so of the rest. And 2. There is this advantage of it, that all the duties required of a Christian, are turned over in promises because by this means a Christian may go to God, when he cannot perform such a duty, and desire him to fulfil his word, and accomplish his promise; and so may make use, not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of the Faithfulness of God also.

There is this third consideration that we would propose, that there are some things of a Christian within a promise, that he doth not believe to be within it, especially these three; First, the challenges of a Christian are within a promise, when ye are convinced that is the accomplishment of a promise: this is clear from *Isa.* 30. 21. where convictions and challenges are turned over in a promise; *when thou art turning unto the right hand, or to the left; thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, crying, this is the way walk in it*: And it may be clear, that our convictions are the accomplishment of promises, because it is the work of the Comforters as well to conceive, *John* 16. 9. as its for him to make one to rejoyce; and if a Christian could believe that his challenge were the accomplishment of a promise, he might embrace

his

his challenges, he might ſee the faithfulneſs of God in his challenges, and he might ſee much Love in his challenges. 2. A Chriſtians croſs is within a promiſe; ſo that when a Chriſtian meets with ſuch afflictions, he may ſit down and cry out, that is the accompliſhment of a promiſe; and this is clear from *Pſal.* 89. 31, 32. Where in the midſt of the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace, that promiſe of viſiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the boſom of them, and from *Pſal.* 119. 75 *In faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me?* Why doth *David* ſay, in faithfulneſs? It was this, becauſe this croſs was the accompliſhment of a promiſe; and it may be clear alſo from that word, *Heb.* 12. 7. *Forget not the exhortation* (ſpeaking of the croſs) the word is, *Forget not the conſolation that ſpeaketh unto you.* As if the Holy Ghoſt did ſay, croſſes do yield much conſolation, as in verſe 11. *They yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs*; And if this were believed, that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of the promiſes, it would help a Chriſtian unto much humble ſubmiſſion, and there would not be ſo much murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accompliſhment of a promiſe. Yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of a promiſe, we would be much in advancing holineſs under our croſs. There is nothing that obſtructeth the ſweet Fruits of righteouſneſs under a croſs, ſo much as impatience; and I would ſay this to commend the croſs, a Chriſtian never moveth ſo ſwiftly to heaven, as when he is under a ſanctified croſs; a croſs when it is ſanctified, will prove a Chriſtians motion to Heaven, more than the enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way, as much as further it. And there is this, thirdly, That is within the promiſe, even your dayly Food, and the hairs of your head: the hairs of a Chriſtians head are all numbered, & within the Covenant; ſo that ye may ſee what a high reſpect Chriſt hath put upon Chriſtians: that is clear from that word,

word, Pſ. 111. 5, 8. *He hath given meat unto them that fear Him, He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.*

Our fourth Conſideration ſhall be, to point out a little theſe grounds upon which Chriſt doth delay his accompliſhment of the promiſes; it is certain that Chriſtians is oftentimes put to this. *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* And the grounds of this delay are theſe; Chriſt knoweth that a Chriſtian can often better improve the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, than he can improve the accompliſhment it ſelf: we might find this in our experience, it being (for the moſt part) eaſier for a Chriſtian to bear his croſſes, than to bear his enjoyments: I think *David* had never ſo ſweet a time as is then, when he was purſued as a Partridge by his ſon *Abſalom*; then grace did breathe forth moſt ſweetly in his actions; but let *David* be under proſperity, and then we ſee he falleth in the ſin of Adultery: And therefore never repine when ye are under a croſs; for certainly, if we had ſpiritual underſtanding, we would not judge it ſo great a hazard to be under a croſs, as under proſperity, ſince we have greater ſtrength to bear the one, than to endure the other. 2. The ſlothfulneſs of a Chriſtian to whom the promiſes are made, this makes the promiſes to be delayed in their performances, as was clear in the people of *Iſrael*, they are fourty years in a wilderneſs before that promiſe of entering into *Canaan* is accompliſhed; It was a promiſe that could have been accompliſhed in a few days, and yet becauſe of their ſin, it was not accompliſhed for fourty years: ye may ſee from that word, *Numb.* 14. 33, 34. The accompliſhment of the promiſes is delayed, that Faith may be more put in exerciſe; this is clear from that remarkable word, Pſal. 115. 19. *Until the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accompliſhed; *the word of the Lord tryed him*; that is, it was the matter of his exerciſe, an exerciſe eſpecially unto Faith; for in-

deed

deed it is much for a Chriſtian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accompliſhment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exerciſe of Prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the beſt improvement of delays is, to be much in Prayer; the promiſes they occaſion prayer, as is clear from *Exod.* 4. laſt. *They believed, and bowed down their heads, and worſhipped.* And from 2 *Sam.* 7: 27. Where the great promiſes being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart, to pray this prayer unto God.* And it is clear from Pſ: 119. 49. *Perform thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delays, when we turn impatient; and it is a bad improvement of delays, when we quite our confidence. Know, that promiſes are accompliſhed after delays, and and they have a luſter upon them, that they may compenſe all the delays. 5. There is this other ground of the delays of accompliſhment of the promiſes, even that the thing that is promiſed, may be ſweet to a Chriſtian when it cometh: this is clear from that word of *Solomon*, Prov: 13: 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; but when the deſire doth come, is as a tree of life.* O! but a mercy that cometh to a Chriſtian through a promiſe, it is ſweet; yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accompliſhment of a promiſe, is more ſweet *than a feaſt of fat things full of marrow, wine on the lees well refined*; to take up your bread and your drink as the accompliſhment of your promiſes, it would make them refreſhful to you. 6. The Lord delays his promiſes, that a Chriſtian may be more in the exerciſe of dependency, and may be always kept about the Throne. A Chriſtian goeth to God from a threefold principle; he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of Neceſſity, from a principle Love. But would you know that which putteth a Chriſtian oftneſt to God? It is a principle of neceſſity. And believe it, that if neceſſity did not drive a Chriſtian unto the foot of the throne, we would ſeldome go from a principle of Love, or from a

principle

principle of Faith. And there is this laſt ground of the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, that the glory of the wiſdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accompliſhment of the promiſe. When the promiſe is long beneath ground, then the wiſdom and power of God doth more appear in the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And from this I would only ſay to Chriſtians that are under this exerciſe, complaining of the want of the performance of the promiſes, theſe few things, believe that the promiſe ſhall once be accompliſhed, that *though the viſion tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak.* 2. Believe, that every hours delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, hath a ſweet deſign of love: there is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Chriſtian, as it is clear from that word *Rom.* 8. 28. And 3. That promiſe that cometh after long delays, it hath theſe three ſweet and ſoul-refreſhing attendants. 1. It is performed moſt ſeaſonably, a Chriſtian if he will obſerve, he will ſee infinite wiſdom ſhining in timing the accompliſhment of the promiſe to ſuch a particular day: a Chriſtian will be conſtrained to cry of it, if the promiſe had been fulfilled before, there had not been ſuch Art of wiſdom, appearing in the performance of it. 3. That the promiſe when it is accompliſhed, will engage a Chriſtian more in the exerciſe of Love, than four promiſes accompliſhed at a ſhort and ſmaller time: there is nothing that will ſo inflame the ſoul with love, as to have a promiſe accompliſhed after delays. And 3. The promiſes accompliſhed after delays, have much ſenſe waiting upon the performance thereof: I think hardly a Chriſtian ever met with the accompliſhment of a promiſe after long delay, but his *ſoul was made as a watered garden, and as ſprings of water, whoſe waters fail not*, this promiſe falleth and cometh to a Chriſtian perfumed with love.

Now we ſhall ſhut up our diſcourſe at this time, and ſhall only ſpeak to theſe ſix defects of a Chriſtians Faith, in believing the promiſes. 1. That our faith is impatient,

tient, we cannot ſtay upon the promiſes if it be delayed. Hence ye will ſee that in ſcripture often, patience is annexed to faith; which ſpeaketh this, that it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian, to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exerciſe of patience. Se Heb. 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſe.* And the word in Rev. *This is the faith and patience of the Saints.* 2. Our Faith in cloſing with the promiſes, it is moſt unconſtant. A Chriſtian when firſt a promiſe is born in upon his ſpirit, he will then believe the promiſe, and joyn with it; but after ſix or ſeven days go about, he will change his Faith; that is remarkably clear from *Exod.* 4 31. compared with *Exod.* 6. 9. When firſt the promiſe cometh to the people of *Iſrael*, that they ſhall go out of *Egypt*, it is ſaid of them in the fourth Chapter at the cloſe, *They believed the promiſes and worſhipped*; But Look to them in *Exod.* 6. 9. and there ye will ſee them not believing, becauſe of *bitterneſs and anxiety of heart.* And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconſtant. 1. Sometimes the reading of a promiſe to a Chriſtian, will be as ſavoury meat; ſometimes when a Chriſtian will read one time in the Covenant, it will be perfumed with love, and his ſoul will be tranſported with joy after it; and at another time when he ſhall read that promiſe again, it will be *taſteleſs as the white of an egg, and as his ſorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in ſtudying the exerciſe of the things that are promiſed, which certainly would cut ſhort many of our debates. There is this third defect of our Faith, that we are not diligent; a diligent Faith we call this, that after a Chriſtian hath believed, he would be much in the exerciſe of Prayer for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, he would be much in the exerciſe of Meditation, to make that promiſe ſweet and lively to him. And a fourth defect is this, we build our Faith more upon diſpenſations than upon the Word; when diſpenſations ſay that which the promiſe ſaith, then we will believe; but when diſpenſations ſpeak the contrary language unto the promiſe, then we will reject our confidence and

hope. I will tell you great myſteries of believing; it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe, when the Commentary ſeemeth to deſtroy the Text; that is, when the Commentary ſeemeth to declare that the Promiſe ſhall never be accompliſhed. In ſum it is this, it is hard to believe, when Diſpenſations will ſay the Word of the Lord will fail, and when Promiſes bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Chriſtian to take impoſſibilities in the one hand, and the word of promiſe in the other, and ſay, O precious Chriſt, reconcile theſe two together, that impoſſibilities do not deſtroy the promiſe, but that the promiſe may be accompliſhed, notwithſtanding of this. 5. We have theſe defects of Faith amongſt us, that we build our Faith more upon ſenſe, than upon the word of promiſe: when a Chriſtian is in a good frame, he will believe; but when Chriſt hideth his face, he will then give his hope. And laſtly, there is this that our Faith upon the promiſes is general; we believe the truth of the promiſes, but we ſtudy not to make a particular application of them. I ſhall not ſtand long to make any uſe of what we have ſpoken; Only I would have the Chriſtians of this Age, and thoſe that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promiſes. A Chriſtian neglecteth theſe three duties of Religion moſt, he neglecteth the duty of ſelf-examining, the duty of believing the Promiſes, and that noble ſoul-exalting duty of meditation: theſe three duties a Chriſtian doth ſo conſtantly neglect, that almoſt he is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them. But I would ſay a word unto theſe that are deſtitute of the Faith of the promiſes, and are ſtrangers unto theſe bleſſed things that are recorded within the Covenant: And it is only this; doubtleſs ye muſt believe your ſenſes, if you will not believe his Word. It is a queſtion indeed, which of all the ſenſes ſhall be moſt ſatisfied in Heaven, whether that of ſeeing, *When we ſhall behold the King in his beauty, and ſee him as he is*; or that of hearing, when we ſhall hear theſe melodious

Halelujahs

Halelujahs of that *innumerable company*, which are *about the Throne*, without any jarring among them all; or that of ſmelling, when we ſhall find the ſweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed *with all the powders of the Merchant*; or that of touching, when we find *Maries* Inhibition taken off, *touch me not*, and be admitted to embrace him who is now *aſcended to his Father*; or that of taſting, when we ſhall drink of theſe *rivers of conſolation, that ſhall never run dry*. This I ſay, is indeed a queſtion; But give me leave to tell you, O Atheiſts and enemies of God; It is alſo a queſtion, which of all the five ſenſes of a Reprobate ſhall be moſt tormented in Hell, and what would you anſwer to it now? Whether think ye the ſenſe of ſight, when ye ſhall behold the darkneſs of wrath, the devil and his angels, and your fellow-priſoners in that dungeon? Or whether ſhall your ſenſe of hearing be moſt tormented in hell, when ye hear theſe ſcreichings and howlings that ſhall eternally aſcend up before God, by the ſouls that are in priſon? O! but the greateſt enemy would have compaſſion on his enemy to hear their crys. Or whether will ye ſay the ſenſe of taſting ſhall be moſt tormented, when ye ſhall drink of theſe *rivers of brimſtone?* Or will the ſenſe of touching, when ye ſhall be eternally ſcorched with theſe flames of eternal indignation? Or the ſenſe of ſmelling, when they ſhall eternally be as it were, ſuffocated with the ſmoak of that ſulphurious furnace that ſhall never be quenched. O! think you if *Cain* would come from hell and preach that doctrine, that we ſhould non perſecute the Saints, would we liſten unto him? If *Abſalom* ſhould come from hell, and ſhould preach againſt the evil of ambition, would we liſten unto him? And if *Achitophel* ſhould riſe from the dead, and preach that doctrine unto you, *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom*, would you ſtop your ears? Or if *Judas* would come from Hell, and preach to you the evil of Hypocriſie, in betraying the Son of man with a kiſs, would we believe him? Or if *Dives* that is recorded in the Goſpel, ſhould come from hell

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and choiſe that Text to preach upon? Jam: 5. 1. *Go to ye rich men and howl, and weep for your miſeries that ſhal come upon you.* And if *Demas* would come and ſecond him with that word, *love not the world, nor the things that are in the world?* I fear ye would cry out, *we will embrace that Doctrine at another time.* We deſire not to inſiſt much upon theſe; but O! to believe that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a deſcription of the Atheiſt, and let him think upon it, it is eaſier to convince hundreds of you, that yè want the fear of God, than that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh an imaginary faith, and a conceit of love! Will ye ever quite theſe two Idols? I confeſs, once ye ſhall have a Faith that no man ſhall ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he ſhall render vengeance unto theſe that know him not. To his bleſſed and moſt precious Name, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON II.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THough Juſtice and Judgement be the Habitation of his Throne, yet Mercy and Truth do go before it, as two divine Uſhers to convey us home unto God. There are theſe two things that we would have Chriſtians principally to ſtudy; 1. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Chriſt. And, 2. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe infinit acts of precious condeſcendency, that Chriſt hath manifeſted towards you, that the one may provoke

provoke you unto ſorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a ſweet aſtoniſhment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Chriſt ſhould preſent that challenge unto you, which *Abſalom* preſented unto *Huſhai*, *Is this thy kindneſs unto thy friend?* O! beloved, What could you anſwer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Chriſt have not forgetfulneſs for that bleſſed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own, I know not unto what uſe Chriſt ſhould have forgetfullneſs, for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works; but he hath a bleſſed art of forgetting our wrongs, though we may ſay on the contrary, that we have a curſed art of forgetting them our ſelves. There are theſe three things that a Chriſtian doth forget; they much forget Chriſt, that he is the great Author of the promiſes, ſo that he may charge them with this, *Why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and theſe divine receipts of love, that Chriſt hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquity; yea, ſometimes they forget them before Chriſt doth forget them, and paſs an act of pardon upon them. I ſhall not ſtand long to plead with you for undervaluing of that bleſſed and noble plant of renown; I think if there were no more to evidence that low eſteem that we have of Chriſt, but only this, that we are ſo much in ſlighting the promiſes, it were more than ſufficient; but beſides, is there not this to teſtifie how much you undervalue that *holy and juſt one*; that ye ſtudy more to have an inward? We may call the Chriſtians of the time *Nephtali*, they are *as a hinde let looſe*, and they give goodly words, but we do not give Chriſt goodly practice, and there is this alſo that teſtifieth our undervaluing of Chriſt, that we ſlight ſo much ſecret and retired correſpondence and communion with him. I ſuppoſe, there are ſome that are here, whoſe conſciences beareth them record, they do not exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs, and I ſhall only ſay that word, that *Gideon* ſpake in another caſe, *If God be with us, how then is all this come up-*

on us? ſuch a ſpirit of formality, ſuch a ſpirit of lazineſs, ſuch a ſpirit of hardneſs, and ſuch a ſpirit of undervaluing of Chriſt: I ſuppoſe that if there were a Chronicle written of all the lives of the Saints that have been ſince *Adams* days; and the Chriſtians of this time ſhould read over all that Chronicle, when they ſhould begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his; and when they ſhould read the life of *Abel*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his; and when they ſhould read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his. O! to which of the Saints can we go? And if we ſhould call, is there any that would anſwer you, *thy life is like mine*?

But to come to the words; we told you at the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon them, that there were theſe things concerning the promiſes, holden forth in them. 1. The riſe of the promiſes is holden forth in theſe words, *whereby*; or as we cleared, the word may be thus rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jeſus Chriſt.

The ſecond thing concerning the promiſes holden forth in the verſe, is, the property of the promiſes, and they are theſe four: 1. That the promiſes are free, holden forth in the words, *Whereby are given unto us*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant are free, and not debt. There is that ſecond property of the promiſes, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in the word *Given*, the gifts and the calling of God *being without repentance*. And the third property of the promiſes was, That they were exceeding *Great*. And the fourth, That they were exceeding *Precious*.

The third thing concerning the promiſes, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth to a Chriſtian by the promiſes, that by them they might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the laſt thing concerning them was, that time when the promiſes were eſpecially accompliſhed, it was then, when *we had eſcaped the pollution of the world through luſt*,

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Now as for the first thing, to wit, the fountain, original and rise of the promises, which is Jesus Christ, *by whom*; In speaking unto this, we shall speak a little unto these two. 1. In what respects Christ may be said to be the Fountain and Original of the promises; and we conceive he may be said to be so; First, because he purchased the promises unto us by his own precious Blood. There is not a promise in all the everlasting Covenant, but it is the price of the Blood of the Son of God; this is clear in *Eph.* 2. 12, 13. where speaking of the Gentiles, that they were strangers unto the Covenant of promise: he setteth down in the 13 vers. the way by which they were brought near unto the Covenant, and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his cross*: and it is clear in *Ephes.* 3. 6. that the promises of the Gospel, *were given unto us in him*, that is, through the purchase of him, and his merits: And *1 Pet.* 1. 19. where we are said *to be bought by his blood*, or the promise of Redemption was the price of Blood. Secondly, Christ may be said to be the Fountain of the promises, in this respect, that he is the Person unto whom the promises of the Covenant are first made, and through him are made over unto us; this is clear in *Gal.* 3. 16. the Promises were given unto *Abraham*, not unto many seeds, but as unto one, that is Christ; and it is clear from 2 *Tim.* 1, 9. where the promises of grace and salvation are said to be given unto us in *him before the world was made*. It is true that the promises are not given to Christ, consider only as the Son of God, (for so he had no other relation to us than the Father or the Holy Ghost) but yet they are first made to him as the Mediator and *head of the Church*, and as that blessed *Daysman*, *and King of Saints*, and the Great Lord, Keeper of all the Rights of the young Heirs of Glory; *And we all receive of his fullness, and grace for grace.* Thirdly, there is this respect in which Christ may be said to be the Fountain of the Promises, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the Promises; this is clear, should

3. 12,13. where these two are conjoyned, *ye are Christs*, and then, *all things are yours*. If once a soul close with Christ in the Covenant of promise, there is not one promise in Scripture, but he may write this superscription above it, *This is mine, this is mine*. Fourthly, Christ may be said to be the Fountain of the promises, in regard that he is the person that applyeth the promises, and maketh us to rest upon them, and to believe them; this *David* did acknowledge, Psal. 119. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope*: as if *David* said, I had never believed a promise, except thou hadst caused me; and it is clear, *Eph.* 2: 8; where Faith is called the Gift of God, even Faith to believe the Promises, it is the royal Donation and Gift of Christ. 5. He may be said to be the Fountain of the Promises, in that he qualifieth us for the accomplishment of them. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, and Christ he infuseth habitual Grace in us, by which we may be helped to exercise Faith upon the promises: so that grant all the Scripture were Promises; yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. 6. The last respect in which Christ may be said to be the Fountain of the promises, is, that all the promises of the everlasting Covenant, they have their accomplishment through him, according to that word 2 Cor. 1. 20. *All the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him, Amen.* So that ye are to bless Christ, not only for the giving of the promises, but for the accomplishment of them also.

That which secondly we shall speak to from this, that Christ is the Fountain of the promises, shall be to press upon Christians these three excellent and soul concerning duties. The first, that they would not have a light account of the promises, since they are Rivolets and Streams that flow from that blessed Ocean. O! but when a Christian did believe that the promise that he hath then, his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the last,

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second Person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promise? And let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their Rise, and to their Fountain; but once know that all the promises are sweet streams of love, that have run through the heart of precious Christ, and from hence they have flowed unto you: and then when this is believed, how shall ye sit down and comfort your selves in the promises, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The second duty that we press upon you from this, is, that since Christ is the Fountain and Original of the Promises, be much in the application of the Promises. And here I shall speak a little upon these three things. 1. A little unto the Evidences and Marks of those that have a right to apply the Promises, and shall only name unto you these few. The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise: have ye convictions of such a necessity? Then from that ye may infer, I have a right to the promises, and are not these glad Tidings? I know there are some that are under such convictions of their sins, that they think it boldness to apply the Promises. But I would say this unto you, that if ye were under sensible convictions of your lostness, ye would give a world for an Hair of a Promise whereby to hang: believe it, the exercise of misbelief is never at its height, till ye would be content to dig through the earth to get a Promise, and till we were at that, that our souls would pursue after them from the one end of the world to the other: and for the ground of this assertion, that sensible necessity giveth a right to the promises, if ye will look to these great Promises of the everlasting Covenant. Are they not given to that Christian that is under a need? *Isa.* 55. 13. and *Mat.* 11. 28. where the great Promise of the Gospel is given out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto these *that are weary and heavy leaden.* Christ would account it an excellent courtesie, that ye should

not dispute, but believe, and that ye would look upon your necessities, as his call to believe the promises. 2. A person that hath an high account of the promises, he hath a right to apply the promises: Let once your soul close with Christ by Faith and Love, and then you may with boldness close with the Promises. I confess if you were more in believing the promises, we would have a higher and more full esteem of the promiser. Would you know the reason that Christ is not accounted matchless? It is, because of this our necessities of the promises are not always within our sight, and our exercising of Faith upon the promises is not our daily work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promise; that which is born in upon a Christians spirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under some sensible exercise of his own infirmity, he hath readily a right to apply the promise: As for instance, when a Christian is debarring himself out of Christ, which is but an unpleasant exercise, to meet with a promise born in upon their spirit, that giveth them some ground of hope, that they may apply and rest upon Christ; or when a Christian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is that evidence persons, that have a high account of the promises, that have a right to apply the promises, it is an excellent and most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual application of the promises: For when once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting Covenant are matchless in his eyes; then that is the *valley* of *Achor*, and a door of hope, that ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undenyable sign that he hath a right to make use of such promises; were your souls never refreshed

freshed by reading of the boundless Covenant of love, and the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christians marking these promises that have upholden them in their straits, I would have them marking the promises that have been lively to their souls, and say, this once was my godly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the *house of my affliction*; and I would have a Christian marking the time of the accomplishment of the promises, in which he will see infinite wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when the promises are accomplished, (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this, you shall find such a reviving and profitable delight in the promises, that should give a very full evidence of our right unto them. 6. Lastly: When a Christian under straits, can receive consolation from no other thing, but all prove Physicians of no value, and miserable comforters; when a Christian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under such a cross, but in the Faith of the promise, that is an evidence that this person hath a right to the promises. I would only say, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promises, and your little exercise of Faith? I would pose you with this, when last studied ye to apply any promise of the Covenant of grace? When last did ye exercise Faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practice of the most part of us? We study perhaps to apply one promise, but for the rest of the promises we lay them aside, and do totally neglect them: we study to apply the promises of salvation, and of having redemption through Christ: but for the promises of sanctification, for the promises to help us to perform duties, for the promises to support us under the cross, for the promises to comfort us in our way to Heaven, for promises in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application to these. O! but if a Christian were believing the promises, he might sit down even while he is

here, and ſing one of the ſongs of *Zion*, though yet *but in a ſtrange land.*

The ſecond thing that I ſhall ſpeak to upon the application of the Promiſes, ſhall be to propoſe unto you, ſome Rules that you would make uſe of in the application of them; and ſhall name unto you theſe.

Firſt, Study theſe four things, one is the Faithfulneſs and Truth of the Promiſes, that ſuch a thing is the ſaying of him that is the *faithful witneſs, and Amen.* This was the practice of *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 10. the way how he was brought to make application of the promiſes, was, 1. By laying down that concluſion, this is a faithful ſaying. *Rev.* 21. from the beginning to the 6 verſe, where there are great Promiſes made, and much ſpoken to the commendation of Heaven, this is ſubjoyned in the 6 verſe, *Theſe are the faithful and true ſayings of God.* As if *John* had ſaid, all that I have ſpoken concerning Heaven, will be to no purpoſe, except ye believe the truth of the promiſes, and this was the practice of *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 28. *Thy words are truth, O Lord*, he ſubjoyneth this unto the actual application of the promiſes. 2. Study the ſweetneſs and excellency of the promiſes, this was the practice of *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *and worthy of all acceptation.* And this was the practice of *David*, Pſal. 119. 72. *I have eſteemed the Laws of thy mouth, better than thouſands of gold and ſilver.* O! ſuch an opinion, to eſteem the Promiſes higher than thouſands of gold. It is Heterodox amongſt the moſt part of you, that prefer the world before the promiſes of the Covenant: and it was his practice, Verſe 103, and 162. *I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great ſpoil*; he had higher account of the promiſes, than to divide the ſpoil after war. 3. Let the Chriſtian ſtudy the neceſſity that he hath of the promiſes, that there is no way of winning above that neceſſity, but by the cloſing with the promiſe, and laying hold upon it. 4. Laſtly, a Chriſtian would ſtudy the ſuitableneſs that is in the promiſe

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to answer their necessities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifested unto them by these.

The second Rule that we would prescribe in the application of the Promises, is, That ye do not expect sensible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the promise. A Christian may apply the promises, and yet want the joy and sweetness that is in them; This is clear, Psal. 119. 85. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust:* There he is under much anxiety, and much sorrow; and yet he is a Believer of the Promises in the mean time, as the words following do clear, *Quicken me according to thy word*; he layeth claim to the promise, and this is clear in the 81 Verse of that Psalm, *My soul doth faint within me*, There is much exercise of sorrow, and yet he is a Believer of the Promise, *but I hope in thy word.* A Christian after he hath believed the Promise, he would put a blank in Christs hand concerning the sweetness of the promise to be made out in its own time. What is sense? It is the precious indulgence of Christ that he giveth to his own. I would press this upon you, propheſie nothing before your believing of the promise; but having believed, ye may surely propheſie that the promise shall be accomplished in its own time, and the word that he hath spoken shall certainly come to pass: but as for sense, as for quickning, as for comforting, as for receiving, ye must put a blank in the hand of Christ, to dispense these things to you as he seeth fit.

The third Rule in the Application of the Promises, is, That ye do not build your Faith upon this, that the promises shall be accomplished, because probability and reason seem to say the thing: I would say this to a Christian, that ye may oftentimes suspect the promise not near to be accomplished, when reason saith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, & that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to pass a conclusion, the word is not

at hand, and the time of the accomplishment of the promises is not near: certainly, many times before Christ accomplish the promises, he will learn us to be living above sense and reason, and he will have reason to submit to Faith he will have probabilities to contradict the accomplishment of the promises, and when probabilities are furthest away, that is his time to work; this is clear in these two signal deliverances of the people of *Israel*, from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod* 3. 4, 5 and *Ezek* 37. at the beginning. And therefore as a Christian would not quite his grip of the promises, because dispensations seem to contradict the accomplishment of the promise, and sometimes cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your Faith upon the promises, and not upon dispensations, even when favourable, seing that we know the way that Christ taketh many times to accomplish the promises, is by contrary means to our apprehension; *His paths are in the whirl-wind, and his footsteps are not known.* And may we not cry out, who can take up the ways of God, whose ways are more subtile than the way *of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon a rock, or the way of a ship upon the sea*, &c.

The fourth rule that we would prescribe unto you in the Application of the promise, is, That ye would close absolutely with the promises, I mean, without limiting the only One. There is a limited closing with the promise, which is the frequent exercise of our hearts; we will close with the promise, but with this restraint laid upon Christ, that whensoever we begin to believe the promises, all things might go as we desire, and this is the great occasion that we do so frequently reject our confidence, and do refuse our hope, when God doth not answer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, We give you this rule, that ye would eye Christ much in the application of the Promises. There is a threefold sight of Christ that a Christian should have

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when He applyeth the promiſes: a Chriſtian ſhould have a ſight of the boundleſs and condeſcending love of Chriſt; that ſo he may be conſtrained to hope, and may be conſtrained to love. 2 A Chriſtian ſhould eye the Faithfulneſs and unchangeableneſs of Chriſt, that what His bleſſed lips have ſpoken, *he will alſo do, and what he hath ſaid, he will likewiſe bring to paſs.* And 3. In the application of the Promiſes, he muſt eye the omnipotency of Chriſt, that what He hath ſaid, He is able to bring to paſs. And O! when ſhall we have occaſion to ſing that ſong, *What hath God wrought for us?* Which was the ſong that *Balaam* ſung, who yet was but a prophane wretch.

6. There is this rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the application of the promiſes, that a Chriſtian after he hath applyed them, he would be much in the exerciſe of Prayer for the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes; this was the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 2. 27. when God in paſſing many precious promiſes, *David* doth ſubjoyn that word, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer.* And we ſee in *Ezek.* 36. 37. along that Chapter, God is paſſing moſt excellent promiſes; and yet in Verſe 37. this is ſubjoyned, *For all theſe things. I will be enquired of the houſe of Iſrael.* And in *Jer.* 29. 10, 12. where the time is coming when God would accompliſh *his good word* (as he ſpeaketh) that is ſubjoyned in Verſ. 12. *Then ſhall ye call upon me and ſeek after me.* And *Daniel* 9. 2, 3. when *Daniel* knew that the Promiſe was near the time of its accompliſhment, then *he ſet himſelf to prayer and ſupplication to ſeek the face of God.* I would ſay theſe three words to a Chriſtian; the ſmalleſt mercy that a Chriſtian meeteth with, if he can call it *Samuel*, that is, *The ſon of prayer*; and if ye can call it *Iſaac*, that is, *The child of promiſe*; he may then, and doth ordinarly receive much conſolation in that mercy. O! but a mercy flowing to a Chriſtian through a promiſe, if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece of brown bread, it will be more excellent cheer, than all

the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O! but to eat and drink, taking these things as the accomplishment of the promises, this would make us eat our bread *With singleness of heart, and much chearfulness.* And there is this, secondly, I would say unto you, when a promise is accomplished, and a Christian is not much in the exercise of Prayer in the accomplishment of it, one to a hundred if he lose not the sanctified use of the accomplishment of that promise. Ah! know ye not that a promise when it is accomplished, may be a curse to a Christian: That word is most terrible, Mal. 2. 2. *I will curse your blessings.* And the last word that I would say to this, is, that a Christian who believeth the promises, notwithstanding that dispensations seem to contradict it, that promise shall be made most refreshful unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O! but a Christian that never had much jealousie, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise, when it cometh, it will be most refreshful to him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousie about the accomplishment of the promise, but it will impare the sweetness of the promise when it is accomplished, except so far, that the transcendent and free love of Christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shall offer a Christian in his application of the promises, when you meet with objections that ye cannot answer, but they do silence you; I will tell you what ye should do with them, misken these obstructions, and lay them by: This was the practice of believing *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 9. *He considered not his own body being weak, and the deadness of Sarahs womb.* The weakness of his own body, and the deadness of *Sarahs* womb, were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, that he could not answer them, and the way he taketh to refute them, was, *He did not consider them*; as it were, he forgot those objections and went about his duty.

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The third thing that we ſhall ſpeak to, in relation to the application of the promiſes, ſhall be ſomewhat for helping a Chriſtian that is ſtanding at too great a diſtance to get the promiſes applyed.

First, A Chriſtian would be much in the ſtudy of theſe experiences of the faithfulneſs of God, and what others have met with, when ye begin to apply a promiſe, ye may be helped in the Faith of applying promiſes, by beholding theſe great Records of the Faithfulneſs of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, *Luke* 1. 36. where helping her to believe that promiſe, that of her ſhould be born the Meſſiah: this is the way that he ſtrengthened her. *Thy couſin Elizabeth is now with child, and hath gone ſix months, even ſhe that was called barren.* And I ſhall only name theſe two places in Scripture, which may help you exceedingly, and ſtrengthen you to believe the promiſes upon this account; There is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41, and 51. It is a moſt remarkable ſaying, *At the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that ſame very day,* (there was not one day miſſed after the time that was ſet, but accompliſhed) *In that ſame very day they came out.* And this is marked in Verſ. 51 again: And there is that word, 1 *King.* 8. 56. where *Solomon*, when he is ſinging moſt ſweetly to God, he taketh an Obſervation of this, *Lo,* (ſaith he) *there hath not failed one word that God hath ſpoken to you by his ſervant Moſes.*

2. Ye would be much in the conſideration of your own experiences, that you have in the accompliſhment of promiſes formerly. This was *Davids* way that he took to ſtrengthen himſelf to believe the promiſes, *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumciſed Philiſtine.* 1 Sam. 17. 35. and 37. 46. And this was the practice of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18. *God hath*

hath delivered me from the cruel lion: And from thence he ſubjoyneth, *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*: And this was his practice, 2 *Cor.* 1 10. where theſe three are ſweetly knit together, *God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he ſhall deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you, O! believe the promiſe, and do not call in queſtion his Faithfulneſs.

3. There is that help, that ye ſtudy much the excellency of the promiſes, that is the moſt noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promiſes, according to that word, Pſal. 119. 111. *I have made thy teſtimonies my heritage for ever*, and the ground of it is that, *becauſe they are the rejoycing of my heart.* The ſweetneſs of the promiſes would engage our heart to apply them. And there is that fourth help, a Chriſtian would ſtudy the omnipotency of God, that ſo he may be helped to believe and apply the promiſe: This is clear in *Zec.* 12. 1. where God going to paſs many excellent promiſes, he uſhers in that diſcourſe with high and majeſtick deſcriptions of his power, in that he *ſtretcheth forth the heaven, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the Spirit of man within him.* And this was the practice of *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 21. The way how he came to believe the promiſe, *He counteth Him able that made it.* that he might perform it. Fifthly, for your help in applying of the promiſes, ſtudy much the unchangeableneſs of Chriſt and his Faithfulneſs, know that he is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came to the Faith of the promiſes: Heb 11. 11. *She believed*, and the ground of it is, that *ſhe judged him faithful that had promiſed.* There is not one act of miſbelief that a Chriſtian falleth into, but it ſaith that God is not Faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the laſt duty that we would preſs from this point, that Chriſt is the Fountain of the promiſes, is that we may have an high eſteem of the promiſes, even of Jeſus Chriſt *in whom they are yea, and Amen.* And I ſhall cloſe.

e'ose at this time with this, are there not many here that have no respect unto him who is that *faithfulness, and the Amen*; who hath promised *us himself, and all things*: and if ye will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but answer these two or three things. 1. Hath not the loss of things in the world affected your heart more than ever the absence from Christ? Hath it not? And can such a soul say, I have an high account of the Promiser? Is it possible that these that will mourn more under the absence of their idols than for the want of him, that they can have an high account of Jesus Christ, I am perswaded of this, there are some Merchants that the loss of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nights rest, and yet absence from Christ never divert them from their sleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jesus Christ, and to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in the silent watches of the night, and to pursue after him. 2 Have not your souls delighted more on the enjoyment of the things of a world than ever they did in the enjoyment of Christ. Is not this true, that the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold, hath affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ did? and have you an high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and communion with the Promiser? Is this true? when went you to your Prayers, but ye wearied ere ye went away? and have you a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts, *O when shall the Sabbath be over? and when shall the new Moon be gone, that I may pursue after my idols*; I would pose you with this, if there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret Prayer? would you not slight Family-Prayer; We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know there are Atheists here, that would love to go to Heaven without Faith, Love, Prayer, and Repentance, they would love to go Heaven by a way never one went before them. And now I shal say but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promise, and have

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the bleſſed expectation of Heaven, whatever the world do, eſteem of him: O remember and comfort your ſelves in the thoughts of the bleſſed day which Chriſt (after he hath paſt the ſentence of condemnation upon the wicked) ſhal go in upon the head of the Troops of the firſt-born, they ſhal walk before as through the Ports of the new Jeruſalem, having crowns of immortal glory upon their heads, and then ſhal follow after him his Angels, and then ſhal follow after him the bleſſed company of the firſt-born, every one having the harps of God in their hands, and they ſhal be ſinging as they enter in through the Ports of the City, *Hallelujahs unto him that was dead and is alive, and now liveth for evermore.* O, to believe that day when firſt we ſhal enter in through the ſtreets of the New Jeruſalem, when we ſhal be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our heads, O, ſuch a day if it were believed, might make us often ſhake our glaſs, and *ſtretch out our necks,* (as the word is, *Rom.* 18. 19.) till once we ſaw that bleſſed day were approaching to us? There is no wearying in Heaven, the promiſes are now accompliſhed unto them, and they are inheriting the promiſes; when ſhal that word be accompliſhed, or when ſhal we have occaſion to ſay it? *Mark* 1. 37. *Behold all men ſeek after thee,* O, the word that theſe Diſciples ſpake to Chriſt: O, ſtudy to love him, ſtudy to believe on him, for, be perſwaded he is upon his way. And I ſhal ſay no more but this, that all the promiſes, that are within the bounds of this everlaſting Covenant, they are yea, and Amen, in an imbraced Chriſt, and laid hold on by faith, ſo I ſay, all the curſes that are in *Deut.* 25. 27. 28. and all the curſes that are within the volumn of the Book of this Covenant, they ſhal be yea and Amen in a deſpiſed Chriſt, and not be laid hold upon by Faith.

SERMON II.

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2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

SOmetimes the soul of a Christian doth move in the paths of God, and in the way toward Zion *as the chariots of Aminadab*; when they are under the Soul enlivening and quickning influences of Heaven, and sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in those blessed paths, as *Pharoahs* chariots, *they drive most heavily*, when there is a cloud between the precious face of Christ and them: and we conceive, that sound and spiritual exercise of Faith upon the promises would make Christians motion more swift towards Heaven. We grant Christ hath three different ways of guiding sons and daughters to glory: There are some that Christ carrieth to Heaven in a chariot paved with love, that all alongst their life, they are living within sight of that promised Land, and are taken up with the refreshing of heavenly joys; such as an one was *Enoch*, who spent his days in walking with God: and there are some that Christ guideth to Heaven in a chariot that is drawn with speckled horses; they have mixed dispensations of sorrow and joy attending them in their walk, and they have a winter and a summer, they have a night and a day, and such an one was *Job* 3. There are some that Christ carrieth to Heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under distracting terror of the most high, and are living perpetually to their own apprehensions upon the borders of hell, and such an one was *Heman*, whom Christ thus guided to Heaven: however if we shal go there, we need not much dispute the way how we came, *for he doth all things*

things well. And upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding ſouls unto everlaſting torment, there are ſome Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of deluſion, making them believe that they are ſtill going to Heaven, and ſuch are the hypocrites in Zion: and I ſhal ſay, I think that chariot was never ſo filled as it is in theſe days. O fear that anxious diſappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An hypocrite he hath ſtrong hopes, he hath ſtrong idols, he hath ſtrong deluſions, theſe are his three attendants. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of prophanity and ignorance of God, *whoſe judgment goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of civiſity whoſe Religion ſtands in this, *concerning the letter of the Law to be blameleſs.* And certainly believing of the promiſes and ſtudying to exerciſe faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of theſe damnable ſoul-deſtroying and murdering deluſions that are within ſome of our breaſts. There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Chriſt he is called precious. 1 *Pet.* 2. 7 Faith is called precious, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious faith with us*; and the promiſes they are called precious in the words that we have read, and Faith (as it were) hath two bleſſed eyes, by one of theſe it beholdeth Chriſt, and by another of theſe it beholdeth the promiſes, and fixeth himſelf upon them. O Chriſtians and expectants of Heaven, would you know what is the riſe of all the ſad things that have befallen you in theſe days? It is this, in ſhort, ye believe not the promiſes. O Chriſtians what is the reaſon that ye carry not your croſſes with patience? It is becauſe ye believe the promiſes by which your ſouls muſt be upholen in the day of your affliction. O Chriſtian, what is the riſe of your little mortification? Is it not becauſe ye believe not the promiſes; for by them ye ſhould *be made partakers of the divine nature.* O Chriſtian what

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is the ground that ye pray so little, and that you pray with so little success? It is because ye believe not the promises. A Christian, when he goeth to pray, he should take these two things along; The sensible convictions of his necessities: And 2. The precious promise that is given to answer that necessity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other Faith. Are there not some here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promise, and that maketh you to pray to so little purpose, O Christian, what is your reason of your so much sorrow, and of your little spiritual comfort? it is that ye believe not the promises: It is no wonder that your name is called *Marah* because ye exercise not Faith upon the precious promises of God. I think without wronging you or any that are here; I doubt much if ever Christians had such hearts, as the most part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can neither praise? both are alike mysteries unto them; What a heart is that, O Christian that can neither believe promises, believe threatnings, nor obey commands? What a heart is that, that can neither sorrow for sin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart is that, that can neither love Christ when he is present, nor can they long for Christ when he is absent, and what a heart is that. O Christian, that can neither love heaven nor can fear hell? and is there not such hearts with us, even with us that are here this day.

At the last occasion we spake upon these words, we spake a little to the first thing in them, which was the rise and the original of the promises, holden forth in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom*: The second thing in the words, was the properties of the promises; and we told you that there were these four holden forth in the words: The first property of the promises; is, that they *are free*, which is imported in that word *are given*; all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God: Hence you will see that oftimes the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that strain, *I will give you*, as is clear, Jer. 32. and 39 *I will give one heart*; and *Ezek.* 36. 26. *I will give*

you a new heart, and Ezek. 11. 19 *I will given you*; it is the ſtrain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, to *give*.

Now in the ſpeaking upon this firſt property of the promiſes, to wit, *their freedom*. I ſhal ſpeak a little unto theſe two, the firſt thing ſhal be to point out unto you the way how a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, and then I ſhal from thence preſs ſome duties.

And in ſhort, as to the firſt, we conceive that a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, by theſe conſiderations; 1. Let a Chriſtian caſt his eye upon the ſweet riſe, and ſpring or fountain of the promiſes, and their ye will ſee their freedom ſhining moſt clear: for what is the fountain of the promiſes? Is it not the boundleſs and everlaſting love of Chriſt: this is clear, *Deut.* 7. 8. where God giving a reaſon of all the great things that he had performed for them, he ſetteth down the riſe of it, *Becauſe I loved you*, ſaith he: and again the ground of this is, *Becauſe I loved you*; There being no reaſon of love, but love, and it is clear, 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. where *David* having received many precious promiſes, he ſetteth down the riſe of all theſe in that verſe. *For thy words ſake* ſaith he *and according to thine own heart haſt thou done all theſe things to make them known to thy ſervant.*

And it is clear, *Ezek.* 17. 18. where God calleth time of entering into Covenant with them, *a time of love*, that love, it was eminently ſhinning in that day, when God did condeſcend to Covenant with them: And hence ye ſee in Scripture, that the promiſes they are called by the name of *mercy*, Mic. 7. 20. *To perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the *Promiſes*, and they are ſo called; becauſe mercy and boundleſs love is the ſole fountain and ſpring of all theſe promiſes. Secondly, Conſider the perſons who have a right to make uſe of the Promiſes. Muſt

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not the Promiſes be Free, when the Proclamation is upon theſe terms. *Rev.* 21. 12. *whoſoever will, let him come*; there is nothing to give you a right to the Promiſes, but only a willingneſs to imbrace them, if ye will ye may take them. And Thirdly, ye may read the Freedom of the promiſes, in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promiſe, Chriſt giveth to the Believer ſtrength to perform that condition; It is known that Faith is the condition of the promiſes, and it is certain that Chriſt giveth a Believer that condition as well as he giveth him the promiſe, *Philip.* 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*; and *Eph.* 2. 8. *It is the gift of God*; It is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to perform the condition, except Chriſt who is ſurety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the Freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the time when the promiſes are accompliſhed, it is often at ſuch a time, when the Chriſtian hath been and is under no very ſpiritual frame. Hence ye will ſee in *Ezek.* 16. 60. 61. That when the promiſes are accompliſhed, then God requireth *confuſion and bluſhing of face*, becauſe of their former ways, and *Ezek.* 36. when the promiſes are accompliſhed, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them, to *remember their own evil ways, and their doings that were not good*; yea he will have them and all the world to know, *it is not for their ſakes that he doth this*, therefore he commandeth them to be *aſhamed and confounded for their own ways*, or the poſture they were in when he accompliſhed his promiſes: And if there were no other thing to ſpeak the Freedom of the promiſes, but the tryſting of the accompliſhment of them with ſuch a Frame, it were more than ſufficient; but beſides this ſee *Davids* practice, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. he readeth the Freedom of the promiſes, from his own imperfections, *what am I* (ſaith he) *and what is my fathers houſe, that thou ſhouldeſt have brought me hitherto?* And even in the ſame text, there is

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an emphasis in that word, *to us, whereby are given to us*, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts; I can bring no other argument so strong as this, *They are given us.*

Fifthly, Ye may read the freedom of the Promises, if ye will consider and take up the infinite fulness and all sufficiency of the *Promiser*, that there is nothing without himself that can perswade him to give such promises. Hence ye will see, *Gen.* 17. 1 when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it still in the frontispiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-sufficient*, as it were to put off all thought of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perswaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection, in himself that could be ground and rise of such promises. And there is that lastly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the greatness of these promises, if they were of a lower nature, then were it less to be wondered, if merit should come in to plead for it self; but when a Christian shal compare himself, and the greatness of the promises together, he cannot but then sing that blessed song, *These are the gifts and donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*

Now the second thing that we purposed to speak to, is, to press some duties upon you from this, that the promises are free, and we shal lay before you these three; The first, That since the promises of God are free, then as you would not destroy your own souls, be much in making use and application of the promises: Are not the promises your life? Did not all the Saints that went to heaven before us, go to Heaven living upon the promises? there was not a step of *Abrahams* life; but he walked with a promise in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himself from the promises; and I shal remove these two mistakes that are incident to Christians in the application of the promises, even from these grounds, that they are three.

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The first is this, There are some Christians that will not apply the promises, because they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baseness, so that when we press you to believe the promises, ye reject this counsel because ye consult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, Psal. 22. 4. *Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted; and were delivered*; but he durst not, the 6. verse, *But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach among the people.* And it is the same divinity that is in these days, when we press you to believe the promises, because of the great cloud of witnesses that have gone before you, that believe the promises. O say ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I would believe the promises, but truely *David* said that same that lived before you, if I were like my fathers, I would believe the promises, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would say to you these two words.

1. Are you inferiour or short unto *David* in holiness, or necessities? We do not question but all of you will answer, we are not inferiour to *David* in necessities, but in holines; Then say ye, if we be not inferiour to *David* in necessities, but in holiness, then make use of the promises for as we cleared the last day, necessitie giveth a right in making use of the promises.

2. I would say, I am certainly perswaded, that sensible necessity would cut short many of our formal debates, in closing with the promises, necessitie (as ye use to speak) hath no Law, and necessity hath no manners. Let me say that to you who will not close with the promises, that if ye were under sensible necessity, if Christ should forbid you to close with such a promise, ye would close with it though he forbad you, as the woman of *Canaan* did, there is nothing but sensible necessity will overcome it: necessity never disputes its right, for it goeth over the belly of such a dispute, it presently maketh use of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly, There is that other mistake amongst Christians

ans in believing the promiſes, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promiſes, and therefore they dare not believe the promiſes, eſpecially that promiſe, of cloſing with Chriſt, they think they are not under ſuch a deep meaſure of humiliation of ſorrow for ſin, nor under ſuch a lively apprehenſion of the excellency of Chriſt. And I ſhal ſay but theſe ſix things unto theſe that will not cloſe with Chriſt, becauſe they want qualifications, or at leaſt have not theſe qualifications after ſuch a way. Firſt, (Let me tell thee O Chriſtian that thus diſputes) go between the firſt ſteps of a Chriſtians way to Heaven, and the laſt, and ſee if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written, Behold here lyeth a man or a woman that came to Chriſt to imbrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold ſuch a grave as this? And why then do do ye ſo much diſpute? Will ye take a tryal of Chriſt? whether he will refuſe you if ye come, and if he refuſe you, ſure I am he will do that which he never did to any before you. The 2. Thing I would ſay to ſuch, that the want of ſuch degrees of ſuch things, ought not to be a ground of your not cloſing with Chriſt; for if ye had theſe qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain the ſame diſputes that ye do now; for when we deſire you to cloſe with Chriſt, ye anſwer, that your ſorrow is not come to ſuch a hight as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to ſuch a height as you pitch for your ſelf to come to: O Chriſtian, if ye come to ten times more, and yet ten times more. ye would have that ſame diſpute then which ye have now, and the Ground of it is this, the more that a Chriſtian hath real ſorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehenſion that hath no ſorrow. Thirdly, if ye want the qualifications that are required in theſe that ſhould cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of Promiſe, then come to Chriſt to get theſe qualifications, I would only ask at you, think ye to ſpin ſorrow for ſin out of your own hearts; Think ye to ſpin humiliation for ſin out of theſe wretched breaſts

breasts of yours? ye must come to Christ for sorrow, as well as ye come to Christ for life.

Fourthly, All the qualifications that are annexed unto that promise of closing with Christ and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, than the qualification of those that ought to come: Ye read such a command as that, *Come unto me all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O say ye, I am not weary, and I am not under the burden of sin, therefore I cannot come; I will tell you what is the real meaning of that command, Christ inviteth those who have the greatest unwillingness, to come and get willingness: But withall it sheweth this, none will come to get rest from Christ, but these that are first weary, and that this is the Lords method of working, first to make weary, and then to ease, but no such matter in his word. That first we must have a weariness of our own making, or else he will not receive us; now but when ye come ye will be weary, and he will receive you.

Fifthly, let me say to you who thus disputes, make your want of qualifications the very Ground of your closing with Christ; I shal but in three places let you see this strange arguing of Faith in closing with the promises: There is that. *Psal.* 40. 11. 12. *Let thy truth continually preserve me*, that is, let thy promises be accomplished, and made lively unto me, which are my preservation: and would ye know the ground and reason that he annexeth unto this; For, saith he, *Innumerable evils compass me about, they have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his very want of qualifications, the ground of his closing with the promise, and seeking the accomplishment of it; and there is that second expression which is most wonderful, *Psal.* 25. 11. *David* prayeth for the accomplishment of that promise, *Pardon my sin*, upon that same very account, *because it is very great*: And I shall give you a third place in which the arguing of Faith is most mysterious, *Ex.* 33.

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compared with *Exod.* 34. 9. In the first place, God denyeth the accomplishment of the promise *of going up amongst the people*; And the ground he giveth of it is, *Because*, saith he, *ye are a stiff-necked people.* And *chap.* 34. *verse* 9. When *Moses* is praying for the accomplishment of the promise, *That God would go amongst them*; he taketh that same very argument out of the mouth of God; Go up amongst us; *For* saith he, *we are stiff-necked people*; God said, he would not go up, because they are a stiff-necked people, and *Moses* desireth him to go up because of this. And there is this lastly that we would say to you, that so much dispute, if ye would have these qualifications that ye want, ye would study to close with Christ by Faith; Would ye have sorrow for sin? then believe; Would ye have high thoughts of Christ? then believe; Would ye have humiliation? then believe; for believing is a mother grace unto all these.

The second duty that we would press upon you from this consideration, that the promises are free, is; that when the promises are given to you, and are accomplished, ye would study to be denyed to any merit in our selves, which ye may suppose to be the rise of the giving or accomplishment of the promises. There is nothing that a Christian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that trysteth a Christian, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not one real sigh for sin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Christ, but it is a fruit of infinit love: there is not the least degree of hatred against sin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not the least promise that is accomplished unto you, but it is the fruit of infinit love; so that upon your receipts from God, there is reason to sing that song, *Not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory:* And therefore, I would press this upon you, O Christians, reduce all your mercies unto the fountain, and there sit down and pen songs of everlasting praise to him. Will ye but take

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a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promiſe, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels & tender heart of Chriſt: his heart is the fountain of all our mercies, and they ſweetly ſtream out of that precious fountain, ſo that if ye had no other thing to commend your mercies from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Chriſt, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and ſolace your ſelves with it.

The laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is this; Ye would be ſtudying to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt, that is promiſed, and freely holden out to you in the Goſpel; O ſinner of eight years old, O ſinner of ſixty years old, O athieſt of Fourty years old, and O ſinner of twenty years old & downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambaſadour of Jeſus Chriſt, to imbrace Chriſt freely offered to you in the promiſes; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that noble *Plant of Renown*, by that everlaſting love that dwelt in his precious heart, by all the ſufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the bleſſings and joys of heaven, & by that love that ye owe to your own precious and immortal ſouls, that ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to you in the Goſpel. And for the further preſſing of this, and for clearing of the way of your cloſing with him, I ſhal firſt propoſe ſome Goſpel myſteries and ſweetly agreeing contradictions, (if ſo we may ſpeak) held forth in Scripture, 1. *Come and buy Chriſt, and yet buy him without money*; that is, come and receive Chriſt, and ye ſhal have as unqueſtionable a right to him as if ye had bought him, that is to *buy without money*: ye have nothing to commend you to Chriſt but neceſſities, and neceſſities bid you go, and Chriſt biddeth you come, why then will ye fit that call? 2. What a Goſpel myſtery is that, *Ye are to buy Chriſt, and he is above price*, there is nothing that we can give to buy that *pearl of greateſt price*; and yet we muſt buy him; then

the meaning is, come, and buy Christ by Faith, and by forsaking of your Idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himself; and so he requireth nothing of you but what he himself doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forsake, and which is no gain for him to receive: Christ is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of your consent to him. 3. This is a Gospel mystery, *that we are to buy without money and without price*, and *yet to buy with a price*, according to that word, *Prov.* 17. 17. There is a price put in the hands of Fools, to buy Wisdom, and what is the meaning of that *to buy with price, and to buy without price*? It is in short this, though Christ be offered to you in the Gospel freely, ye must not sit down, but be active in closing with him; What is the price that Christ requireth of you? even this, that ye would forsake your soul destroying idols, and that ye would forsake your former evil ways, & take hold of the present opportunity for imbracing him. And O! cursed shal the heart be that will not imbrace Christ; O but to have him one hour in our arms, it were well worth ten thousand Eternities of the enjoyment of all things that are here below: Ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breasts*. O but a sight of him that now is the eternal ravishment of all that are above, would transport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above all expression! *Fourthly*, There is this Gospel mystery by which we would press you to imbrace Christ. *A Christian must buy Christ, and yet he must have him freely.* Is there not an inconsistence do you suppose, between buying and having freely? But I would say this to clear it, Christ is both the seller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer; Christ he presenteth himself unto your hearts, and he desireth to sell himself, and he perswadeth and freely enableth you to buy him, I will tell you what Christ doth, he standeth without our hearts, and within our hearts, he standeth without and knocketh by the Word;

and

and he ſtandeth within, and openeth by his Spirit. Chriſt, he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The ſecond thing I ſhal ſay to perſwade your hearts to take Chrtſt freely promiſed and offered unto you, ſhal be this; Will ye conſider that there is willingneſs in the heart of Chriſt to take you. I ſhal give unto you theſe ſix things that ſpeaketh out Chriſt his willingneſs to receive you. *Firſt*, Doth he not command you to come & receive him? and if ye could multiplie objections throughout eternity, why ye ſhould not cloſe with Chriſt, ye may cut them all aſunder with his knife, *This is his Commandment*: And doth he not command you, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that lab ur.* And *Iſai.* 55 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the water.* *Secondly*, He doth regrate, and deeply reſent it, that they will not come. I think Chriſt never weeped ſo bitterly, as that day when he weeped over *Jeruſalem*, that ye would not imbrace him, *Luke* 19. 41. *If thou, even thou*, at leaſt, *in this thy day, had known the things that belong to thy peace*: And *Joh.* 5. 40 *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* O what think ye can be the riſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould ſorrow, becauſe ye will not give up your hearts to him; doth he increaſe his gain when ye give him your hearts? No, certainly, but he cannot endure that madneſs in you; that ye ſhould forſake your only gain. *Thirdly*, would you do Chriſt a joyful turn, and make his heart glad? imbrace him; This is clear, *Luke* 15. 5. That when he findeth the ſheep that is going aſtray, *He returneth rejoycing*. *Fourthly*, I ſay no more unto you, would ye make all the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity to rejoyce, would ye make all the Angels of Heaven to ſing, would ye make all the Saints that are rou d about the Throne to exult for joy? then give your hearts up to Chriſt, and cloſe with him in the Covenant of promiſe; according to that word, *Song* 6 laſt verſe, *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon*

thee. Four times that command is repeated, *return*, and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the perſons of the Trinity may rejoyce, that *we may look upon thee*, *Fourthly*, Conſider but how he hath condeſcended to give himſelf at a very low rate: what will ye give for Chriſt? O ſinners, what will ye give for him? would ye give the world for Chriſt? I will tell you what ye will get Chriſt for; ye will get him for a very look, *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth:* And think ye not that it is a matchleſs mercy, that the thirty three years ſufferings of Chriſt, all the pains and tortures of his heart, his being under the unſupportable wrath of an offended God; the Fruit of all that ſhould be yours for a look, will ye deny that to Chriſt; O! do you ever think to find a more down-coming Market? Yea, *Fifthly*, Doth not this ſpeak an admirable willingneſs to have you, he is to give you that look. It is impoſſible for theſe curſed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Chriſt a look, and therefore he hath promiſed, to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They ſhall look to me*, that very look ye are to get from Chriſt, and ye ſee it is within the compaſs of a promiſe. *Laſtly*, That ſpeaketh Chriſts willingeſs to receive and take you, that he doth not take the firſt refuſal. O Chriſtians that are now in Chriſt, if Chriſt had taken a hundred refuſals from you, ye ſhould never have been in heaven, but he waiteth for an anſwer, and doth not take us at our firſt word, according to that word, *Song* 5. 2. *I am wet*, ſaith he, *with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night:* He was long knocking at her heart, and ſtayed a long time there patiently ſuffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would only poſe you, think ye that if one of the richeſt of you were ſuiting a very poor woman, and ſhe refuſed you ſo many times, would your proud hearts ſubmit to take her; and yet how oftentimes hath the precious heart of Chriſt ſubmitted to ſo many affronts, and refuſals that we have given him; I think

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if it were possible, Christians would wink, when first they behold Christ upon the day of their espusals; For, I suppose there will be great dispute between shame and love, desire and confusion; shame will make you close your eyes, because you have oft-times undervalued that Prince, and yet love will not let you close them, desire will put you to look, through reflecting upon your former ways, will make you blush and be ashamed.

Thirdly, To perswade you to receive Christ in the offer of his free promises, I shal but say these three words and close. 1. Look to these excellent gifts that Christ bringeth with him, he bringeth Justification with him, and is not that an excellent gift. He bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the Holy Ghost with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth the love of God with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under sufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? but why should I name what he bringeth? He bringeth him self and all things, and what would ye have more? O, but for one saving blink of his face, it would make your hearts lay down your enmity that you have maintained so long. 2. O Christian, that ye may close with Christ, do but remember the happiness that ye will have in imbracing him, I told you not long since, and now I put you in mind again: There is a sixfold Crown which shall be put upon your head; Would you have long life? then come to Christ, and ye shal have a Crown of eternal life: Would ye have glory? then come to Christ, and ye shal have a Crown of glory: Would ye have knowledge of the mysteries of God? then come to Christ, and he shal crown you with knowledge: Would ye have an eternal felicity, and an uninterrupted happiness? then come to Christ, and ye shal have an immortal Crown: would ye have holiness and sanctification? then come to Christ, and ye shall have a Crown of righteousness; yea, he shal put a royal Crown upon your head, a Crown

of pure Gold; and then that word ſhal be accompliſhed to the full, *Ezek.* 9. 16. *Then ſhall they be as the ſtones of a Crown liſted up, and as an enſign upon the land.* O what a day think ye it will be, when Chriſt ſhal hold your Crowns upon his hand, and ſhal put them upon thoſe heads never to be removed again, here we are often put to ſigh out that lamentation; *The Crown is fallen from our heads, wo unto us for we have ſinned,* but there ſhal be no more ſin to make our Crown to totter. 1. I muſt tell you, There is a fourfold ſuit of apparel that ye ſhal be cloathed with ere long: ye are now cloathed with *heavineſs,* but then ye ſhal be cloathed with the Garments of *Praiſe*; And did ye ever know ſuch a Robe as that? Is it not a more excellent Robe, than the robes of Kings and Emperors in the Earth, to be cloathed with Praiſes? Many of them are, and ſhal be for ever cloathed with infamy and ſhame. 2. Ye ſhal be cloathed with change of raiment, and ſhal be brought unto the King *in raiment of needle work,* O poor Laſs and poor Lad that ſitteth upon the dung-hill, that knows not what it is to have change of apparel; ye ſhal have it in that day, when Chriſt ſhal Solemnize the Marriage with you, ye ſhal miſken your ſelf. O Chriſtian, if ye knew your ſelf never ſo well, ye will be forced to cry out *! O, Is this I, is this I? that am now made perfect through his comlineſs.* 3. Ye ſhal be cloathed with the garments of *immortal glory,* ye that have *your foundation in the duſt, and dwell in the houſes of clay,* ye ſhal *then be cloathed with theſe excellent Robes of immortality, and cloathed upon with your houſe from Heaven.* And *laſtly,* Ye ſhal be cloathed with the Garments of the *ſpotles righteouſneſs of Chriſt.* O ſuch a Majeſtick walk as ye will have, when ye ſhal have a Scepter in one hand, and a palm in the other, theſe Robes put upon your back, and theſe Crowns upon your heads, and then ſhal be walking through theſe ſtreets that are paved with Gold. 4. I ſhal give you this word to think upon, that there are five things that ſhal be your

your exerciſe in Heaven; 1. Ye ſhal be conſtantly taken up in wondering: If it be not preſumption for us to think a little; What is the exerciſe of Chriſt, and the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this, Chriſt is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty, Chriſt is looking upon them, and they upon him; and is it not true, that if Chriſt be now raviſhed with one of our eyes, *Song* 4. *verſe* 9. much more ſhal he be raviſhed when both our eyes ſhal be given to him, and ſhal eternally behold him, without going a whoring after other lovers. 2. Ye ſhal be continually in the exerciſe of praiſe, joy and delight ſhal be flowing out eternally; ye ſhal then ſweetly warble upon theſe Harps of God, and ſhal cry, *Hallelujah unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne:* There ſhal be no diſcord there: there is a ſweet and and beautiful harmony amongſt all theſe ſpiritual and heavenly Muſicians. O but to hear them it were a Heaven, though we had not that bleſſed Lot as to ſing with them. 3. Ye ſhal be continually taken up in the exerciſe of Love; Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here, but Love ſhal be your predominant grace when ye are there. O! Is it not a myſtery to take up theſe ſweet emanations of Love and Delight, that ſhal paſs between Chriſt and you? ye ſhal be infolding Chriſt, and Chriſt ſhal be infolding you. 4. Ye ſhal be continuallie beholding him. I think it is hardlie poſſible for the Wife to remember her Husband in Heaven, though ſhe loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that ſitteth upon the Throne, they will be thinking it too low an obje& to be taken up with looking upon an other in theſe relations: all will be ravished beholding him, and one another in him, and for him. O the bleſſed exerciſe of theſe that are now entered within that City, and within theſe gates, whoſe Name is *Praiſe*. 5. Ye ſhal be continuallie taken up in beholding, ye ſhal be always knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endleſs myſteries and perfections of Jeſus

Chriſt. O ſuch a ſtudy? Is it not pleaſant always to be ſtudying Chriſt? and will not theſe things perſwade you?

And now but a word more to theſe that will not have this free offer: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt and take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the ſtead of that perſon for ten thouſand worlds, if ye would not imbrace Chriſt, and take him for your portion, the ſtones of the wall of this houſe will bear witneſs againſt you, and they ſhall have a tongue to ſpeak againſt you, that ye have been invited to take him, and would not: ere long that day is approaching, and drawing near, when the Athieſts and refuſers of Chriſt, they ſhal change their Faith, & they ſhal change their Fear, & they ſhal change their Joy, & they ſhal change their Mind, ye ſhal change your Faith, ye that are refuſers of Chriſt; for I know there are many that think they have cloſed with Chriſt, who never did cloſe with him; that faith ſhal flee away, and ye ſhal believe the contrary: ye ſhal change your love, or at leaſt your opinion of your love: ye think ye love Chriſt, but ye do not imbrace him; I will tell you what will be your exerciſe, and I can tell you nothing ſo terrible, Chriſt ſhal eternally hate you, and ye ſhal eternally hate Chriſt, there ſhal be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore, O that dreadful word, *Zech* 11. 8. it ſhal then be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt, *My ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred me.* And ye ſhal change your Fear, for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yet the horrour of God ſhal make you ſhake as a leaf, and ye ſhal change your light and your judgment. Ye do now undervalue Chriſt, and thinks him of nothing worth; when Chriſt is preſented unto you, *there is no beauty why ye ſhou'd deſire him*: But O think on that day when Chriſt ſhal ſit down in the clouds, and ye ſhal ſee his beautiful face, every ray of which ſhal be able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be raviſhed with the ſight. O what will be your thoughts of him? and if the bleſſings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the

eternal

eternal, unſupportable vengeance of Chriſt ſhal light upon your heads, that would not condeſcend to take him: ye ſhal be curſed in your life, ye ſhal be curſed in your death, and ye ſhal be curſed after death; What ſay ye to it? are ye content to take him? ye might bleſs the day that ever ye were born, if ye could once come to cloſe with Chriſt. Now to him that hath the keyes the houſe of *David*, that can open your hearts to give him entry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON IV.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three moſt glorious and excellent Gifts that God hath beſtowed upon man, there is that comprehenſive Gift of Heaven, *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is ſo called, *Joh.* 4. 10. and ſure ſuch a gift as that ought in ſome ſenſe to blind our eyes, and make us to look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The ſecond royal gift that the Lord hath given, is the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, which are given to us through him: a Chriſtian that is united unto him by the bloud of Faith, he may write this above the head of every promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *Faith*, which is that grace that maketh uſe of the former two: and we conceive that our little making uſe of theſe three excellent gifts, is the great occaſion and cauſe why theſe four moſt ſad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1 The evil of a ſilent conſcience, that though *we be profound to commit iniquity*, and do *love a reward under*

every green tree, yet our conscience doth not speak, nor reprove us, and if at any time they do speak, yet there are some that are so possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, they can neither hear what God doth speak, nor can they hear their conscience. 2. The evil of a fierce rod, we know not the voice of our Rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open *our ears to Discipline, nor seal up our instruction.* 3. There is that evil of *silent mercies*, the mercies that we receive of God, we understand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, speaking to us in an unknown tongue? and yet we may say, there is not a rod, nor a mercie a Christian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did understand it. And *lastly*, there is that evil which hath befallen us; and alas, this is the capestone of all, *a silent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cries, but turneth about the face of his Throne, *covering himself with a cloud in his anger*, so *that our prayers cannot pass through.* Alas; may not each Christian of this time crie out, *call me no more Naomi, but call me Mara, because the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. with me.* In short, I think there are these two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Israel*, *First*, That we live without sight of God. And *Secondly*, That we live without sight of our selves, and all this, because we live without sight of these precious Gifts, Christ and his promises.

But now to the words, We told you, that in them there were these four things holden forth concerning the promises.

1. The Original and Fountain of the Promises, in that word, *Whereby, or by whom.* 2. The properties of the promises, which we told you, were these Four. The First was, that the promises were free, holden forth in that word, they are *given*, all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the Noble gifts of God. The *Second* (of which) we are to speak at this time, is this, that the promises of the Covenant, they are unchange-

unchangeable, which is importod alſo in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance; And as to this, 1. We shal prove the Truth of the point, and for this end, conſider that place, *Numb.* 23. 19. which was a part of *Balaams* ſong, *Hath he not ſpoken it, and will he not alſo do it? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall it not alſo come to paſs?* and Pſal. 89. 34. *I will not break my Covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*: And the point is clear alſo, from the Name that the promiſes getteth in Scripture, are they not called *the ſure mercies of David*, Iſai. 55. 3. And are they not ſometimes in Scripture called *Truth*, as we may ſee from *Micah* 7. 20. *Thirdly*, The nature of the Covenant proveth it; in that it is called *an everlaſting Covenant*, and ſometimes a *Covenant of Salt*, becauſe that Covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrefaction. And *Fourthly*, It may be likewiſe shown from the conſtant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes. This *Joſhua* taketh notice of, *Chap.* 23. 24. where when he was a dying. *There hath not failed* (ſaith he) *one thing of all theſe good things that God hath ſpoken*; and he is ſo confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verſe, and he taketh notice of it, *Joſhua* 21. 45. where he hath that ſame expreſion again, *There hath not failed* (ſaith he) *one thing of all the good things that God hath ſpoken unto us by Moſes*: and indeed, there is near ſix Thouſand years experience that preacheth this Truth, *the promiſes are unchangeable*, ſo that we may now ſay, *The word of the Lord is tried as ſilver is purified in a furnace of earth hot ſeven times*, If there had been any falſhood in the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, ſix thouſand years tryal ſhould have brought it to light; but doth not every one of the Cloud of Witneſſes that have gone before us, leave this teſtimony upon record, *Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who will alſo do it, his promiſes is with the night*

and

and with the day. It cannot be altered; the ordinances of heaven continue to this day, much leſs can this Covenant of love be broken or altered, only we would have you taking this Caution by the way, that there are ſome conditional promiſes that God paſſeth unto his people, which in the deepths of his ſpotleſs wiſdom, he doth not accompliſh unto theſe who never fulfil the condition; ſuch was that promiſe that he gave to the *Iſraelits* in the land of *Egypt*, of their poſſeſſing the land of *Canaan* who yet died in the wilderneſs. And hence is that ſtrange word, *Numb.* 14. 34. *Ye ſhall know my breach of promiſe, ſaith the Lord*, which is a word ſpoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpoſe in God, but only ſhewing that becauſe they did not believe, and ſo fulfil the condition of the promiſe, therefore it was not to be fulfiled perſonally to them.

The ſecond thing that we ſhal ſpeak to upon is this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhal be to propropoſe theſe ſix Golden Pillars and excellent Foundations, upon which the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is built. And the firſt of them is, *the Omnipotency of God*, that there is nothing that he hath promiſed, but he is able to affectuate, and to bring to paſs; Therefore, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. when God had been paſſing many excellent promiſes, he ſtrengtheneth their Faith with this, *Thus ſaith the Lord God Almighty*; and no doubt, *where the word of this King is, there is power, and who can ſay unto him, what doſt thou!* O miſbeliever of the precious promiſes of the Covenant; be aſhamed to caſt up your eyes to Heaven above, or to the earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may ſpeak out that to you, do not misbelieve God, but truſt in him, *that is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working.* The ſecond is, the wiſdom and infinite counſel of God, he hath not only compleat ability to accompliſh the promiſes that he hath given, but he hath the depths and treaſures

of

of knowledge, by which he hath contrived the way of the accompliſhment of ſuch a promiſe: Hence is that word 2 *Sam.* 23 5. That the Covenant is *well ordered*, which ſpeaketh out the wiſdom of God, and then that word is ſubjoyned, the Covenant *is ſure*; yea, the Covenant of Grace is ſuch a thing, that there is ſo much of the Art of Heaven, ſo much of the infinite Wiſdom ſhining in it, that it is called *the Counſel of God*, Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counſel.* The third golden pillar, is *the infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accompliſh the promiſes, yet he will take an argument from his own love, to make out ſuch a promiſe to us; That there is ſometimes (if not always) nothing in us, but that which may ſpeak forth delays of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; but when God can bring no argument from us, he can bring an argument from his own love, as *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. where giving a reaſon of the accompliſhment of many promiſes, and of his love to them, *I loved you*, ſaith he, *becauſe I loved you*; there being no reaſon that can be given for love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſer*, that he is the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever, and without all alteration and ſhaddow of change. Hence ye may ſee, *Exod.* 3. 14. when God is repeating many precious promiſes unto *Moſes*, He (as it were) ſtrengtheneth *Moſes* Faith with this, *I am* ſaith he, *that I am*, which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableneſs of God, that what he hath ſaid, he will certainly accompliſh in its own time, and though *the viſion do tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak.* The fifth is, *the faithfulneſs of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath ſpoken. Love, it maketh the promiſes, the Faithfulneſs and Power of God accompliſheth the promiſes, and the Infinite Wiſdom of God, chooſeth the moſt fit time for the performing of them. Hence it is ſaid, Pſal. 119 89, 90. *Thy word O Lord, is for ever ſettled in heaven*, and the ground

of

of it is in the following verse; *For thy faithfulness is unto all generations.* Hence you may see that oftentimes when God is making promises to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that speaketh in righteousness.* Isai. 45. and Isai. 63.

1. O! must not the promises be unchangeable, that are made by the Father, who is the God of Truth? Must not the promises be unchangeable, that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth it self, and the *faithful witness*, and *Amen*? Must not the promises be unchangeable, that are applyed by the Holy Ghost, that is *the Spirit of Truth*? And must not the promises be unchangeable, that are made known unto us by the Gospel, that is *the word of Truth*? Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithful in the accomplishment of his promises? O! what a clear sight of the Faithfulness of God, shall a Christian get, when he shall be standing upon the outmost Line between Time and Eternity? Then he will see God Faithful in accomplishing all his Promises unto him, from first to last.

The last golden pillar is, *the Justice of God*; His Justice, it now putteth him to accomplish his promises, mercy and righteousness have now kissed each other: Hence is that word, 1 John 1. 9. *He is just and faithful to forgive*; So that now the accomplishment of the promises, is not only an act of love, but it is an act of justice also. We confess indeed, love and mercy maketh the promises, but Justice and Truth also putteth God to the accomplishment of them: Hence is that word, Micah 7. 20. *To perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and is it Truth to *Jacob*? It is in short this, because Mercy made the Promises to *Abraham*, but Truth did accomplish the promises to *Jacob.*

The third Thing that we shall speak to from this; That the Promises are unchangeable, shall be, to press these six duties upon you from this point.

O! Christians and Expectants of Heaven, who have Christ in you, the hope of Glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promises are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is pressed from that ground, Heb. 6 18. *That by two immutable things we might have strong consolation.* There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Christian from this, that the promises shall be accomplished in their own time. We conceive that the word unchangeable, it is engraven upon the head of many a Christians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of your promises? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our blessedness? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming, when we shall have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable.* And we conceive, that if these two were believed, the Truth of the Promises, and the unchangeableness of the Promises, a Christian might walk through this Valley of Tears with Joy, and comfort himself in hope.

The second Duty we would press, is this, That ye would surcease, and give over your disputings, and carnal reasonings, about the accomplishment of the promises. Since the promises of God are unchangeable, ought not we with this, to silence misbelief, and all that blind humane reason can say? This is pressed, Heb. 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all strife.* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an Oath, it ought to cut short the disputings of misbelief. And here give me leave to point out a little these grounds, upon which it is that Christians do so much dispute the accomplishment of the promises, and to let you see how all these things may be answered, from these six pillars that were given of their unchangeableness.

The first is, when Dispensations seemeth to contradict the Truth of the promises, the promise it speaketh one thing, and Dispensations seemeth to speak another; and this is the occasion that oftentimes a Christian crys out

out, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practice of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. When diſpenſations were upon the top of the accompliſhment and truth of the promiſes, then misbelief, it ariſeth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I ſhall one day fall by the hand of Saul*: And we conceive, that diſpenſations contradicting the truth of the promiſes, was the occaſion of his ſpeaking that word, Pſal. 116. 11, *I ſaid in my haſte all men are liars.* And I would only ſay to you that diſpute the Truth of the promiſes upon this account, that diſpenſations contradicteth them. Do but conſider this, God in his way is not like unto you. Would ye know the time when the promiſes are neareſt their accompliſhment? It is then, when we can leaſt ſee that they are to be accompliſhed. The promiſes are never nearer their performance, than when we think that they are fartheſt off from it; And therefore let the Faith of the Omnipotency of God, uphold your ſpirit under ſuch a debate: Then let diſpenſations ſpeak what they will, ye may anſwer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him*, there is nothing too hard for the Lord. I grant this may try the ſtrength of the ſtrongeſt Faith: yea, we find it hath made the beſt to ſtagger, when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed; this was the ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. That when ſhe heard that ſhe ſhould bear a ſon in her old age, ſhe laughed within her ſelf, and did as it were, mock at ſuch a promiſe. And this was the ground of *Moſes* his misbelief, *Numb.* 11. 21, 22. he did not ſee a probability that ſuch a multitude ſhould be fed with fleſh, and therefore he did call in queſtion the Truth of that promiſe This was the ground of the misbelief of that Lord that is made mention of, 2 *King.* 7. 2. And this was the ground of *Zacharias* misbelief, *Luk.* 1. 20. But I would ſay to you that do ſo much conſult with probability in the exerciſe of your Faith, theſe two things.

1. There

1. There is nothing too hard for God: This was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14 Verse of that 18 Chapter, *Is there any thing too hard for God?* And, 2. Faith is never in its native and spiritual exercise, till once probability contradict the truth of the promise, then Faith it is put upon the Stage, then Faith doth act; but as long as Faith and Probabilities think one thing, then the day of the Tryal of the strength of Faith is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their Interest in God; sometime a Christian will believe a promise, and before the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkned, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then they do quite their Faith in adhering to the Truth of that promise. These two are joyned together, want of the Faith of our Interest, and want of the Faith of the accomplishment of the promise; as is clear from that word, Psal. 77. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone?* There is disputing of his Interest, and presently this is subjoyned, *doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient Records of Heaven, and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, it will be a hard and difficult Task for him, if not impossible to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the Truth of the Promises, is, their mistaking the way how the promises are to be accomplished; There are some that suppose, That when ever they close with a promise by Faith, there is no more but to enter into the possession of such a promise; but do not mistake it, between your believing the promise, and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark days interveening, according to that word in *Mark* 10. 30. where Christ passing great Promises to his Disciples, He, as it were, doth add, do not mistake me, that ye shall have these Promises without Trouble and Affliction, *Ye shall receive*

(saith he) *an hundred fold in this life with persecutions*. A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a winter before the spring-time come, wherein the promise shal bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christians disputing the Truth of the promises, is, when the promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when first he meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth, *O believe*. But when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, then his Faith beginneth to faint, and his Hope beginneth to languish and give over. Yet sometimes Christians they fall into this Fault, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it; which, if God do not keep, but go over, then they immediatly cry forth, *What is my strength that I should wait? And what is my confidence that I should prolong my days?* This is clear in the practice of *Abraham*, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, *Gen.* 12. 2. The long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his misbelief, That he vented Gen. 15. 3. *O Lord, what wilt thou give me since I go childless?* But ye must know, That before *the vision shall speak*, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to 1 Pet. 5. 9. 10. *After ye have suffered a while*, then the promises shall be accomplished, and ye shall be made perfect.

The sixth ground upon which Christians call in question the accomplishment of the promises, is, The consideration of the greatness of the thing that is promised, when they compare it with their own worth and deserving, then they begin to dispute, *O! shall such a thing be?* Shall unworthy I, shall sinful I, shall self-destroying I, shall I that am *less than the least of his mercies*, receive the accomplishment of such a mercy? This we may suppose was one ground of *Abrahams* misbelief, *Gen.* 17. 17. when he cryed forth at that same time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promise of an *Isaac*, O *that Ishmael might live*: he thought

thought an *Iſaac* ſuch an excellent mercy, That he could not with preſumption, expect the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And in *Zech.* 8. 6. This was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth ſweetly obviat, *if it be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of his people in theſe days, ſhould it alſo be wonderful in mine?*

The laſt ground upon which a Chriſtian diſputs the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is, when in the time between their believing, and the accompliſhment of the promiſe, they fall into ſome groſs iniquity: This maketh them exceedingly debate, whether the promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed unto them, for ſince they have tranſgreſſed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purpoſes and reſolutions, they cannot ſuppoſe God will abide Faithful to them; and once accompliſh his promiſe to them. And the only way how to anſwer this diſpute, is, to look to the Faithfulneſs of God, and uſe that word, 2 Tim. 2. 13. *Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himſelf.*

And now to ſhut up this ſecond Duty that we preſs from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes; I ſhall only ſay theſe two words unto you. 1. Aſſure your ſelves of this That theſe accompliſhments of the promiſes that come not through the lively exerciſe of Faith, doth loſe much of their ſweetneſs, much of their luſter, and of their advantage: ſometimes a promiſe will be accompliſhed unto a Chriſtian, when he hath not been much in the conſtant and lively exerciſe of Faith in believing ſuch a promiſe; but then the diſadvantages that attendeth ſuch a one, are not eaſily expreſſed: how often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, and I was not aware?* How little of God doth he ſee in it? How ſhort is he in praiſes, and rendering to the Lord according to the good he hath received? How negligent in improving or keeping the mercy, and how loth to lay it out for God, when he ſaith, *the Lord hath need of it*: and many things more of this

this kind, which may press us to be stedfast in believing. And 2. O! disputeless, and believe more. What profite shall you have of your disputings? And if ye would produce all your strong Arguments, why ye should not believe the promises? Ye may drown them in this immense depth, *God is unchangeable.* Let me say but this further, there are three most remarkable changes in a Christian, in his making use of the Promises: First, sometime he will believe the promises, and make application of them, and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promise which presently he believed. Will not sometime a Christian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine?* And ere Twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* Sometimes a Christian in the morning will cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved;* and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out, *Thou hast hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Secondly, sometimes a promise will be to a Christian *sweeter than the honey comb*; Sometimes a Christian will die and live upon the promise; Sometimes the believing of a promise, will be to a Christian *as the valley of Achor for a door of hope*, That will make him to sing, and yet ere many days go about, he may come to that same very promise, and it will prove Tasteless to him as the *white of an egg*; so that he may cry out, *O! that it were with me, as in months past, and in the ancient times*: And O! where is the sweetness that I found in such a promise? O! it is gone, it is gone, and I am left desolate. Thirdly, Sometimes when a Christian will be believing such a promise, and resting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) see much light and clearness in that promise, he will take up the *deep things of God* that shineth therein: and at another time he may come to that same promise, and it may be dark to him, so that his light hath evanished: and sometimes the joy of a Christian in the promise will

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be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Chriſtian may come to the promiſe, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore, if ye would have the promiſes always ſweet unto you, pray over them, pray that God might breathe upon ſuch a promiſe, and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would preſs upon you from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſe, is, that which by proportion ye may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*: theſe two are conjoyned; yea, *Joſhuah* ſeemeth to infer the unchangeableneſs of the Threatnings, from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, *Chap.* 23. 14. compared with *verſ.* 15. and theſe two are conjoyned, Zech. 8. 14, 15. *That as I thought to puniſh you, and it hath come to paſs, ſo I have thought to build you up, and it ſhall come to paſs.* And I would from this, deſire you to ſtand in awe, leſt you come under the laſh of unchangeable threatnings of God; for know, That as God is unchangeable in the promiſes, and there is not one word in all the everlaſting Covenant that ſhall not be accompliſhed; ſo likewiſe know, there is not a Curſe in all the Book of the Covenant, but it ſhall be accompliſhed in its time: And know this likewiſe, That the day is coming, when that ſad word that is in *Hoſ* 7. 12. ſhall be accompliſhed, *I will chaſtiſe them as their congregation hath heard.* And O! ye that live in this place, if all the Threatnings that your Congregations hath heard, ſhall be accompliſhed in their time, ye may take up the laſt words of *Balaams* ſong, alas! *Who ſhall live when God ſhall do all theſe things?* And therefore, ſince the Threatnings of God are unchangeable, as alſo the Promiſes, Life and Death is ſet before you: and either ye ſhall be the Object of the unchangeable Threatnings of God; or ye muſt be the Object of the unchangeable Promiſes of God; And therefore, I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpful to the deſtruction of your own immortal ſouls,

ſouls, you would not undervalue the Threatnings that ye hear in your congregations, ſince there is a declaration paſt, that the Threatnings in your Congregations ſhall be accompliſhed.

Now there is that fourth Duty that we would preſs upon you from this, That the promiſes are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiſer*; let this commend the *Promiſer*, let this conſtrain your heart to delight in the *Promiſer*. O what a bleſſed diſpenſation of love is this, That an unchangeable God ſhould make unchangeable promiſes unto changeable creatures? If the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace were as changeable in their nature, as we are changeable, there ſhould not one of us go to Heaven; but know it is the bleſſed deſign of love, and it hath been a bleſſed practice of the infinite wiſdom of God, that when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he will give them unchangeable promiſes. And I would once invite you again, that you would come near and embrace this *unchangeable Promiſer*; I ſhall ſpeak theſe five words that may perſwade you. 1. Chriſt is eaſily to be gotten, if ye will but take him: ye will get Chriſt if you will but hear, yea, for one liſtning of your ear to his voice, ye ſhall get him; according to that word, Iſa. 55. 31. *Hear*, And what of that? *and your ſouls ſhall live*. Is not this to get Chriſt at an eaſie rate? And as we ſpake before, ye will get Chriſt for a look, and is not that an eaſie rate? Iſa. 45. 22. *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ſaved*. Have ye a deſire to take Chriſt? Ye ſhall get him for that deſire; according to that word, Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth let him come, and he that will let him come*. Will ye but conſent to take him, ye ſhall have him, and what can ye have at a lower rate than this? Shall never your curſed hands take the Pen, and put to your name to the bleſſed Contract of Marriage? Shall never theſe curſed hearts of yours cry forth, *Even ſo I take him*, and do promiſe to live to him, and to die to him, O ſtrange! will ye not do it? Upon what Terms

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would the world have Christ? Is it possible to have him without a consent to take him? Oh! If ye would but open to him, he would condescend to come in unto you, and sup to with you, and ye with him. Do ye but stir to open, Christ hath the Keys in his own hand, and he will help you to open. O! what if Christ the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that Branch of Righteousness shall be despised, being offered upon so easie Terms? Then cursed eternally, shall be the person that thus undervalueth Christ, it had been better for him that he had never been born; cursed shall ye be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death; all the curses of the Persons of the Trinity will light upon you, yea, believe it. O! Wife, that hath a believing Husband, in the day that the great Sentence of eternal Excommunication from the presence of the Lord, shall be past against the undervaluers of Christ, a believing Husband will say Amen to that Sentence, even to his Wife that did thus undervalue that noble Plant of Renown; and the Wife upon the other part, will say with hearty consent, Amen, to that Sentence against the unbelieving Husband, and the Father to the Son, and the Son to the Father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would press upon you from this, That the promises are unchangeable, that ye would be perswaded to make the promises your Portion, and your Inheritance. What can ye want that will choise the Promises for your Portion? I know your cursed eyes doth not love to make invisible promises, and that invisible Crown, and an invisible God or Portion, we look to walk by sight, not by Faith But Oh! if you know once what it were but to claim a relation to Christ? Did ye once know what it were to have but Christ a moment between your Breasts, ye would cry forth, O! *Who would not love him who is the King of Saints*? O! Who would not be content to quite all things, that they might get Christ that noble Pearl of price?

And

And there is this laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this, that the Promiſes *are unchangeable*; read a Lecture from this, O! Chriſtian, even your misbelief. God hath confirmed his everlaſting Covenant with *an oath*, with the *Blood of his Son.* by the two great broad Seals of Heaven, *the Sacrament of Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper*: And what doth all theſe Confirmations ſpeak? but a dreadful misbelief: And that we know not what it is to be reſting on a naked word of promiſe. I ſhall ſay no more, but deſire that ye would conſider and take notice of theſe three: Firſt, ye have been ſolemnly and often invited by the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt to cloſe with him, and to take Him for your Husband and your Lord: and will you conſider preſently, That all the Angels in Heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three moſt glorious, moſt bleſſed Perſons of the Trinity, that they are Witneſſes, and ſhall be to your diſſent, and are there not many here whoſe hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty conſent to cloſe with Chriſt, that is the great Promiſer? and who hath laid all the bonds that Heaven or Earth could contrive to gain ſinners hearts to himſelf: O precious Chriſt, what could he do to perſwade us to love him, which he hath not done; and yet that may be your name, which is in *Epheſ.* 2. 2. *Children of diſobedince.* Or as the word is, Children of *Imperſwaſion*, we cannot be perſwaded.

Secondly, I fear if Chriſt himſelf would come from Heaven and invite you, and ſay, here am I, imbrace me, there are ſome here who would cloſe not only their eyes, but their ears, they would cloſe their eyes, leſt the beauty of Chriſt ſhould allure them, they would cloſe their curſed ears, leſt they ſhould be gained, and captivate by the ſweet enchaunting voice of that bleſſed Charmer, when he ſhould charm ſo wiſely. And laſtly, will thou tell me, O Chriſtian, and expectant of Heaven, what a day ſhal it be when all the unchangeable promiſes of God ſhal be accompliſhed? What a

day

day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall ſee him as he is*? What a day ſhall it be, when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall be made like unto him*? What a day ſhall it be, when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall know as ye are known*? O! Are ye not longing for the day of the full accompliſhment of the precious promiſes of God, when ye ſhall ſit down and comfort your ſelves in the eternal and unſpeakable fruition of them? O! let us long and wait till the day ſhall be when the voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, that *the myſteries of God are finiſhed*, till the day when that voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*: O! how unwilling are we to leave a world? And how badly would we take up our reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*? I think, if this were the night that that bleſſed voice were to be heard in Heaven, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*: ſome, if not many of the Chriſtians (that are ſo indeed) in this time, would cry forth, *O! ſpare a little, that we may recover ſtrength, before we go hence and ſhall be no more.* Are ye not longing to bring the King over *Jordan*, and to bring him home to your ſelf, and to have your heart brought home to him? O! bleſſed, bleſſed are thoſe that are above, *Is not the voice of theſe that ſhout for victorie* heard amongſt them? Is not the voice of theſe *that ſing for joy*, heard amongſt them? *Job* doth not now any more complain, *Why doſt thou make me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth, and ſetteſt a print upon my heels*? *David* doth now no more complain, *Why doth thy promiſe fail for evermore*? But rather doth ſweetly ſing, *How is thy promiſe fulfilled for evermore*? *Heman* doth now no more complain, *While I ſuffer thy terrours I am diſtracted*: but rather cry out, *While I feel thy comforts I am raviſhed.* The voice of mourning is now ſweetly gone away, and the voice of Hallelujah and of eternal praiſing of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, is now heard in the place of it: O! Such a day that ſhall never admit of a follow-

ing night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come, and ſhall come, and ſhall not tarry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON. V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three cardinal and excellent Graces that are exerciſed and taken up with the precious promiſes: There is the excellent Grace of Faith, that believeth the Truth and the goodneſs of the promiſe; There is the precious Grace of Hope, that with patience waiteth for the accompliſhment of the Promiſe, and doth ſtay until the Viſion ſpeak: and that noble Grace of Love, That loveth the Thing that is promiſed; and taketh exceeding much delight in the *Promiſer*. If we may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, we think theſe ſtrange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Eccleſiaſtes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptineſs of all things that are below God; and we do indeed conceive, That it is the great deſign of God, in the darkning of our pleaſant Things, and in making *every gourd to wither*, under the ſhaddow of which we uſe to repoſe our ſelf, and in *famiſhing all the goods of the earth*, to bring his own to delight themſelves in this inviſible treaſure, *the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant*, and in him who is the ſubſtance of them; and that ſince all Things elſe are declared to be vanity, we might choiſe theſe as our own Portion for ever.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we were ſpeaking unto the properties of the promiſe, and we told you that there were four of them holden forth

forth; 1. *The freedom of the Promiſes.* 2. *The unchangeableneſs of the Promiſes*, of which Two we have ſpoken unto you. And now there remaineth other Two to be ſpoken to, to wit; That the Promiſes are *exceeding great*, and that they are *exceeding precious*: a ſweet and excellent, through a rare conjunction, greatneſs and goodneſs here kiſſing one another, preciouſneſs and highneſs linked together by the bound of Union; And we ſhall ſpeak unto theſe two Properties together, and ſhall clear a little this Thing, in what reſpects the promiſes of the Covenant may be called exceeding great and precious; and we conceive in ſhort, they may be called ſo in theſe eight reſpects; 1. They are exceeding great, in reſpect of the great price that was laid down to purchaſe them, there not being a promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant, above the head of which this may not be engraven in great Letters, *Here is the Price and Purchaſe of Blood*: and no doubt, this ought highly to commend the promiſes, that are bought at ſo infinite a rate. Muſt they not be great and precious Things, That ſo wiſe a Merchant did lay down ſo infinite a Treaſure for the purchaſing of them. 2. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect of theſe great and precious Things that are promiſed in them: Is not godlineſs a great Thing, and this is within the boſom of a promiſe? Is not Heaven an eternal enjoyment of God a great and precious Thing, and yet this lyeth within the boſom of a Promiſe? Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over Idols, great and excellent Things, and yet all theſe are treaſured up in the promiſes. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect of the great advantage that redounds to a Chriſtian through the enjoyment of them: The promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, (if ſo we may ſpeak) are the Penſils that draws the draughts and lineaments of the Image of Chriſt upon the ſoul, it is the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, by which *we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of*

the Lord; and as *Peter* doth here ſpeak, the promiſes are ſuch things, whereby we are made partakers *of the divine nature*. 4. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect of that near relation that they have unto Jeſus Chriſt. What are all the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace? Are they not ſtreams and Rivolets that flow from Jeſus Chriſt? Chriſt is the Fountain out of which all theſe promiſes do ſpring: and can this Fountain that is ſweet in it ſelf, ſend forth any bitter Waters? Muſt they not be precious things that have ſuch a noble deſcent? As the Streams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, and from him unto us, as the pouring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron*, which ran down the head unto the skirts of his Garments.

5. They may be called exceeding precious promiſes, in reſpect they, or rather Chriſt in them, are the object of precious Faith; What is the meat upon which Faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promiſes of the Covenant, and Chriſt the kernel of them? What are theſe Things that Faith taketh ſo much delight in, and is ſupported by? Is it not the promiſes of the Covenant? 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the Things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Chriſt. There is not a promiſe within the Book of the Covenant, but as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, O! come to Chriſt. The promiſes are indeed the Star that leadeth us unto the houſe where Chriſt doth ly, and there is no acceſs unto Jeſus Chriſt, but by a promiſe. Chriſt is to be found there, for he dwells within the bounds of the everlaſting Covenant, and there he will Tryſt with his people, and be found of them. And 7. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect that the Saints have found ſuch ſweetneſs, and ſuch unſpeakable delight in the promiſes. Did not *David* find a great ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he cryeth forth, *The words of thy mouth are better unto me, than thouſands of gold and ſilver*: Did he not find much ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he was conſtrained to cry out, *Thy Law is ſweeter*

er unto me, than the honey and the honey comb. David in a manner was put to a *nonplus*, to find out any ſuitable ſimilitude and ſignificant reſemblance, to point out the ſweetneſs of the promiſes; Though we may ſee the Chriſtians of this Time in a ſpiritual Feaver, they have loſt their ſpiritual Taſte; ſo that we may ſay, if we may allude unto that word, 2 Sam. 19. 25. *I am this day fourſcore years old, and cannot diſcern between good and evil, can thy ſervant taſte what I eat, or what I drink?* They know not what it is to be overcome with the ſweetneſs that is to be found in theſe excellent ſtreams of divine conſolation. Laſtly. The promiſes may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and matchleſs account of them: Hence that word here rendered *precious*, may likewiſe be rendered *honourable*; which ſpeaketh forth, That there is nothing that hath ſo much of the eſteem of a Chriſtian as the promiſes. Would ye put wiſdom, or riches, or honour, or what ye will, in the ballance with the promiſes? They would cry forth, what ſhould I profit to gain all theſe, if I loſe the promiſes? We ſhall ſay no more of this, but that the Promiſes are indeed that Apple, the eating of which, would make us in ſome reſpect, (and in humility be it ſpoken) *as God, knowing good and evil*: The promiſes are theſe Things that doth elevate the ſoul unto a divine conformity with God. And, Oh! That this might be the Fruit of them. The promiſes are as cords let down to ſouls ſinking *in the myrie clay, and in the horrible pit*: Do but lay hold upon them, and ye ſhall undoubtedly be drawn up, and ye ſhall *ſet your feet upon a rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to ſpeak of the third Thing in the words: which is the advantage and unſpeakable gain that floweth to a Chriſtian through the promiſe, holden forth in theſe words, *That by him ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*: which words doth not hold forth, That there is any ſubſtantial change of our natures unto the Eſſence of God; but only it holds forth this, That the ſoul

that is taken up in believing of the promiſes, they ariſe unto a likeneſs and conformity to him in Holineſs, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs. And as theſe advantages that come to a Chriſtian through the Promiſes, 1. We muſt lay this for a ground, That the Fruit of all cometh to him through believing the Promiſes, and in making application of them.

And the firſt is, That they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent neceſſary work of Mortification: This is clear from the words of the Text; as likewiſe from 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the Promiſes have upon Sanctification, may be ſhowen unto you in theſe three. Firſt, They lay hold upon a Chriſtian, a divine Bond and Obligation to ſtudy Holineſs, that ſince Chriſt hath ſignified and teſtified his reſpects unto us, in ſo ample and large a way, as to give us ſuch precious promiſes, we ought to endeavour to ſtudy Holineſs, which is that great reward of Love that he ſeeketh from us, for all things that he hath beſtowed, and we receive; and this is the meaning of that, 2 *Cor.* 7 1. Secondly, The ſtrength and furniture of a Chriſtian, for fulfilling and accompliſhing the work of Sanctification, lyeth within the promiſes. Are not the promiſes of God unto a Chriſtian, as *Sampſons* Locks in which their great ſtrength doth ly? And if once they cut themſelves off from the promiſes through miſbelief, their ſtrength doth decay, and they become as other men. Where muſt the Chriſtian go to for ſtrength? Is it not to the promiſes? Is it not to the Name of the Lord? Yea, this is the ſtrength of a Chriſtian, unto which he muſt reſort continually. And Thirdly, The promiſes of God, they hold forth that unſpeakable reward that attendeth that Chriſtian that ſhall ſtudy Holineſs. There are ſeveral promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, that cryeth forth to the Chriſtian, to him that overcometh will this promiſe be accompliſhed, to him

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that overcometh will this Truth be fulfilled; and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with all his discouragements he meeteth with in the way, he burieth all his anxieties within the circle of his immortal Crown, which he hopeth for, and seeth in the promise, and his hope maketh him dispense with his wants, his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy, maketh him to dispense with his sorrows.

The second advantage is, That the Faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withal, maketh him delight in the performance of it: This is clear from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27 where *David* believing the promises, it is subjoyned, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer unto God*; and if any will look into the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking of him as one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestick apprehensions of his glory; and is clear also Psal. 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed*; and as if *David* had said, would ye know what made me thus fervent, diligent in prayer? It was that, *I hoped in his word*: And hence it is that he hath so many prayers in that Psalm, all were occasioned through the Faith of the promises; as for instance, when he cryeth forth, *Quicken me according to thy word, be merciful unto me according to thy word.* We conceive, the Faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer to these four divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him to pray with Faith; when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promises, then he ventureth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psal.* 65. 3. where ye may see a man believing, and praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words, *As for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away*; it is not said, *thou wilt purge them away*, but *thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of Faith, and the boldness of Faith. A Christian that

believeth the promiſes, he can take the promiſe in his hand, and preſent it unto God, and ſay, fulfill this promiſe, ſince thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art Faithful. 2. It maketh a Chriſtian pray with much humility; for when he doth underſtand, That there is nothing that he hath, but it is the Fruit and accompliſhment of a promiſe, he doth not boaſt as thoſe that have received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: This is clear, *Gen.* 32. 10. where we may ſee *Jacob* ſpeaking to God with much humility; and in the ninth verſe he is ſpeaking to God in much Faith. And 3. It maketh a Chriſtian pray with much love: would ye know the great ground that we are ſo remiſs in the exerciſe of love in Prayer? It is, becauſe we build not our Prayers upon the Promiſes. And 4. It helpeth a Chriſtian to pray with ſuch fervency; when was it that *David* cryed to God? Was it not when he was believing the promiſe that was paſt to him of old, we would not plead with God with ſuch remiſsneſs, if we did believe the promiſes that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, That the Faith of the promiſes doth ſometimes uphold a Chriſtian under his ſpiritual Deſertions and Temptations. Is it not certain, That ſometimes he hath been ready to draw that concluſion, *I am caſt out of his ſight, and ſhall no more behold him in the land of the living?* When a promiſe that hath been born in upon his ſpirit, hath ſupported him, and made him to change his ſong, and to invert his concluſion: This is clear from *Pſal.* 94. 18 When I ſaid, *my foot ſlippeth*, there is the concluſion of misbelief and deſpair; *yet thy mercie, O Lord, did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring in conſolation; not from bygone experiences only, but certainly from that which he found in ſome precious promiſes that was born in upon his ſpirit. Many excellent cords of love hath Chriſt let down unto a ſoul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: It is clear likewiſe from Pſal.

119. 81. *My ſoul fainteth for thy ſalvation*: as if *David* had ſaid, I am in hazard to give over my hope, and to break my confidence: And would ye know what was it that ſupported me under ſuch an eſtate, *I hoped in thy word*; Hath not this oftentimes been the ſong of a Chriſtian in their darkeſt night, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my ſoul*: Faith will ſee a morning approaching in the time of the greateſt trouble, and no doubt, That promiſe that upholdeth a Chriſtian in their doubting and moſt miſbelieving condition, the lively impreſſions of that promiſe will remain a long time; and when firſt it is born in upon their ſpirits, they will ſee no ſmall love ſhining forth, in carving out ſuch a promiſe to ſuit with ſuch a providence, as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promiſe, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience and divine ſubmiſſion under our ſaddeſt outward afflictions: This is clear from Pſal. 37. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living*: and from *Pſal.* 119. 49, 50. where *David* telling his exerciſe in the 49. *I hope*, ſaith he, *in thy word*; immediatly he ſubjoyned, *This is my comfort in my afflictions*; as if he had ſaid, if I had not had the promiſes to be my comforters, I had ſit alone and kept ſilence, and ſhould have remained without comfort in the day of my adverſity: And verſe 92. *Unleſs thy law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in mine affliction.* And we conceive in ſhort, the Influences which Faith upon the promiſes, hath upon the patient bearing of the croſs, may be ſhowen unto you in theſe two particulars; Firſt, Faith is an excellent Prophet, that always propheſieth unto us good Things. Would ye enquire at Faith at your midnight of affliction, what is its opinion of God, and of your own eſtate? Faith would ſweetly reſolve you thus, *Wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Faith knoweth not what it

is to have a wrong construction of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Christians cross. If sense, reason and misbelief interpret your cross, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto me as an enemie, or as a liar, or as waters that fail?* But if Faith that noble Interpreter, do interpret your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its divinity, *I sow in tears, but I reap in joy: weeping it may be at the evening,* saith Faith, *but joy shall come in the morning.* Secondly, it affordeth unto a Christian, such soul-refreshing consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that in a manner, they forget their sorrows, *as waters that pass away:* this *David* doth divinely assert, in Psal. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in affliction.* The Faith of the Promises are indeed that Tree, which being cast into our waters of *Marah, they will make them immediatly become sweet.*

The fifth advantage is, That the Faith of the promises, doth help a Christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a Pilgrim, as is clear from *Heb.* 12. 13. where these two are sweetly linked together, there is the embracing of the promises by Faith, and confessing *that they were strangers and pilgrims here on earth.* And we shall show the influence that Faith hath upon this, in these Three; 1. It maketh a Christian see the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Glob of the world, *that is not vanitie and vexation of Spirit.* Faith is that prospect, through which a Christian hath most clear discoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Christian see the endless perfections of Heaven, and bringeth it within sight of the immense and everlasting hope, and this maketh him to live as a Pilgrim, and to declare plainly, that he *seeketh countrie.* And 3. It doth help him exceedingly forward

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in that bleſſed work, of weaning off affections from all things that are here; would ye know where a believers heart is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know where his Thoughts are? They are in Heaven. Would ye know where his Converſation is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know where his Hope is? It is in Heaven; his Treaſure is in Heaven, and therefore his Heart and Converſation is there, *And Chriſt in him is the hope of glory.* And indeed, more Faith of the Promiſes, would conſtrain us all to ſubſcribe that *Confeſſion of Faith*, that is in *Heb.* 11. 13.

The ſixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the Promiſes, is, That it is the mother of much ſpiritual joy and divine conſolation, and maketh a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of praiſe; This is clear from Pſalm. 71. 14. *But I will hope continuallie*; and then immediatly is ſubjoyned, *And will yet praiſe him more and more.* As likewiſe from *Rom.* 15. 13 and from 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. If a man would have his way to Heaven made pleaſant, and while they are ſitting by the Rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *ſing one of the ſongs of Zion*; then ought they to believe the promiſes, and *choiſe them as their heretage for ever*; and then he may ſing in hope, and praiſe in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the preſent: indeed when he looketh to his poſſeſſion, there will not be ſo much matter of rejoycing, but when he looketh upon his hopes and expectations, he may be conſtrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my glorie, I my ſelf will awake earlie.*

The ſeventh advantage is, That the Faith of the promiſes is a notable mean to attain unto ſpiritual life: This is clear from Iſa. 38. 16 *By all theſe things* ſaith *Ezekiah, do men live*, (ſpeaking of the promiſes) *and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit.* As likewiſe from Pſalm. 119. 50. *Thy word* ſaith *David, hath quickned me.* O! what ſpiritual and divine life doth attend that Chriſtian that is much in the exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes? and what is the great occaſion that our hearts are oftentimes

times dying within us like a ſtone, and we are like unto thoſe that are free among the dead? Is it not becauſe we do not make uſe of the Promiſes?

Eighthly. There is that advantage, that Faith of the promiſes, it maketh a Chriſtian have an eſteem of the thing that is promiſed. What is the reaſon that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlaſting Covenant, *this is a Zoar, a little one*? Is it not becauſe we do not believe? Great things ſometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comelineſs that appeareth in them why they ſhould be deſired; but if we had ſo much Faith as *a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, *How excellent are theſe things that are purchaſed to the Saints, and how eternally are they made up, that have a right but of one line of the everlaſting Covenant, that is well ordered in all things, and ſure?*

And ninthly. The Faith of the promiſes is the door at which the accompliſhment of the promiſes doth enter in: according to that word, Luke 1. 45. *Bleſſed are they that believe, for there ſhall be a performance of theſe things that are ſpoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, *The viſion ſhould ſpeak, and ſhould not tarry*; And no doubt, a mercy coming to us as the Fruit and performance of a promiſe, will make it an exceeding refreſhful thing. When a Chriſtian getteth leave to ſing that Song, which is in Iſai. 59. 9 *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will come and ſave us.* And when a mercy is the fruit and accompliſhment of the promiſe, there is a beautiful luſtre and dye upon that mercy, which no Art could ſet on, but only the Finger of the Love of God. The ſmalleſt mercy then becometh a matchleſs myſtery of Love, and the moſt matchleſs myſteries of Love without the exerciſe of Faith, they become as Things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praiſe them. Faith maketh our Thoughts to aſcend, and misbelief maketh our Thoughts to deſcend, in relation to the mercies of Heaven.

Laſtly,

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, we have these two mentioned in the Text, 1. That by them we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and are brought up unto that blessed conformity with God, which we had lost in the fall. 2. That by them we escape the corruption in the world through lust. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of these things at this time, because I am only to speak to the exercise of Faith in the Promises. But O what excellent mercies are these, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off these ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our souls. O! how should this commend the promises unto us? that by Faith in them we do all, *behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now that which *secondly*, we shal speak to, shal be the Advantages that result to a Christian from a spiritual Observation of the Lords accomplishing his promises; for here ye see in the Text, the Apostle maketh an Observation of these Excellent things that are the Fruit of these precious Promises, when they are accomplished. And the first Advantage is, That it stampeth the Soul of a Believer with most Divine impressions of Love, this is clear, *Isa.* 38. 15. where *Hezekiah* cryeth out, *What shall I say, he hath spoken it himself, and hath done it?* being as it were, astonished and overcome with the apprehensions of the condescendency of God, he is put to a *non plus*, and to, *What shall I say?* Psal. 41. 8. 9. *As we have heard,* (saith *David*) *so have we seen in the City of the Lord of hosts*, that is according to his promise, we have had suitable performance; and he subjoyneth, *verse* 9. that which was both their exercise and their Advantage, *We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of the temple*, as it were, the Observation of the performance of the Promise, made their thoughts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one

one promiſe, then eternity were ſufficient to make a Commentary upon. It is one wonder of condeſcendency, that ſhould oblige and bind himſelf to us by promiſes: and another depth of wonderful love, that he ſhould perform theſe Bonds, and anſwer his word with performance.

The ſecond advantage is, that the obſerving of accompliſhment of promiſes doth bring into the ſoul new diſcoveries of God; this is clear, *Exod.* 6. 5. where God thus ſpeaketh to *Moſes*, *I was known* (ſaith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of the Almighty, but by the Name of JEHOVAH was I not known to him*, that is, by the name of giving an accompliſhment unto my promiſes, that Name was not diſcovered unto them, but ſhould be made known unto their poſterity, in the day when his promiſes ſhal paſs into performances; and hence it is alſo, that when the Lord is ſpeaking of the accompliſhment of great promiſes, he doth ſo often in the Scripture ſubjoyn that word, *Ye ſhall know that I am JEHOVAH, or the LORD*, Iſai. 49. 23, 52. and 60. 16. and indeed we daily find it ſo, for, is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe, a new diſcovery of the *wiſdom of God*, that ſhineth in the ſuitable timing of the accompliſhment of a promiſe? is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe a new diſcovery of the *faithfulneſs of God*, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth, and is not every performance of the promiſe a new diſcovery of the *love of God*, that he deſireth to magnifie his mercies above all his works, and a new diſcovery of the *power and omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promiſe, notwithſtanding of all the things that are in the way, yea, *maketh things that are not to be, and bringeth to nought things that are.*

The third advantage is, that it helpeth a Chriſtian to have high apprehenſions, and majeſtick uptakings of God; This is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. compared with *verſe* 17. where *Paul* cloſing with that promiſe, *That Chriſt came in*

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the world to ſave ſinners, and beholding the accompliſhment of it, in himſelf, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* Amen. There is an Emphaſis in the word *Now*; as if *Paul* had ſaid, I could never praiſe and extoll him till now, and I am ſo much bound to Chriſt, that I will not delay this exerciſe one moment, now I will bleſs him; and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. where the accompliſhment of the promiſes that are there, make the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* he became matchleſs unto them, through the performance of the promiſes. And ſo we conceive that theſe who are much in ſpiritual obſervation of the performance of the promiſes, they will ſee precious draughts of the Majeſty of God engraven upon them, ſo that they will be conſtrained to cry out, that he above *is Mighty, that his Name is JEHOVAH, and in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, upon which we ought to rely in our greateſt ſtraits.

The fourth advantage is, the obſervation of the accompliſhment of the promiſes will help a Chriſtian when he is redacted unto new ſtraits, to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon God; his former experience will produce hope in his ſoul; for there is not one diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God, but hath a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear Seeing unto his word, This is clear from *Pſal.* 55. at the cloſe, *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, ſaith *David* and then he ſubjoyneth *Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perſwaded, thou wilt likewiſe perform that word unto me, and from *Pſal.* 37. 2, 3. he giveth that Title unto God, *verſe* 2. that he *performeth all things for him*, and then he doth ſubjoyn, *He ſhall ſend from Heaven and ſave me*, and (by the way) the ſoul that can give God that Title and ſtile, *that he performeth all things for them*, that ſoul muſt of neceſſity be in a choiſe and excellent ſtate; And

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the point is likewiſe clear from 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. where *Paul* ſaith, *God hath delivered me, and he doth deliver me,* and from hence he draweth that concluſion of Faith, *And he will yet deliver me*; We confeſs ſometimes our former experience of the Faithfulneſs of God, they do not ſupport the Faith when we are redacted unto new Difficulties, which is either occaſioned through the greatneſs of the ſtraits that we are now put to, (in our apprehenſions) above that which we were put to before; ſo that though God did deliver us when we were *running with foot-men*, yet we have no Faith to believe that he ſhal deliver us when we are about to *contend with horſes*; or elſe it is, through the unfaithfulneſs of our walk, in not anſwering the precious diſpenſations of Chriſt, in accompliſhment of his promiſes, for this maketh us that we cannot with boldneſs make uſe of his Word when we are brought unto a new ſtrait, a guilty conſcience is the mother of misbelief.

The *fifth* Advantage is, The accompliſhment of the promiſes doth occaſion much ſpiritual joy, and rejoycing unto his own. We told you, the giving of the Promiſes occaſioneth joy, and when the promiſes travelleth in Birth and bringeth forth, that occaſioneth much more ſpiritual joy; this is clear from *Pſal.* 28. 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſhield, my heart truſted in him, and I was helped* And he draweth this excellent concluſion from it, *Therefore my heart greatly rejoyceth, and with my ſoul will I praiſe him.* And we conceive, that ſometimes, God truſteth the accompliſhment of the promiſes with ſome precious manifeſtation of himſelf to the Soul, which maketh them to *rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; but however, this is the matter of a ſpiritual Song, *That mercie and truth have met together, and righteouſneſs and peace are kiſſing one another*: is it not a pleaſant matter of a ſong to behold *Love* making Promiſes, and to behold *faithfulneſs* accompliſhing them. And the *laſt* is, That the Obſervation of the Accompliſhment of promiſes, doth ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen a Chriſtians Faith in his intereſt in God, ſo that now many diſputings are ſilenced, and many queſtions now are out of the way, this is clear, *Pſal.* 31. 21. 22. *David* confeſſing his quarreling before, but when once the Lord *had ſhewed him marvelous loving kindneſs in a ſtrong Citie*, then all his quarrel was againſt himſelf, becauſe he had quarrelled, and did ſay *in his haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

And now we ſhal only ſpeak a little unto ſome duties that we would preſs upon you, from that which we have ſpoken; And the firſt duty is, that Chriſtians would be much in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes; and ſtanding upon their watch tower untill *the viſion ſhall ſpeak*: and we ſhal only give you theſe to enforce it, it is commanded that you ſhould ſo do, this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe: where *David* preſſeth that Duty very much, *wait on the Lord*, ſaith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in that ſame verſe, *wait I ſay on the Lord*: and no doubt, the doubting of it ſpeaketh not only the Advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great neceſſity that we have to go about it: and that ſame word is repeated by *David*, *Pſal.* 31. 24. *Be of good courage*, which is that ſame, to wait upon the Lord.

2. Theſe that wait patiently for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, God will ſtrengthen them to wait, this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe, *wait on the Lord*; and when we are *Hagar*-like, caſting away the Child of hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refreſhment, by which we may be ſupported under our diſquietment, *and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart*; And there is this,

3 There ſhal be a ſpeedy accompliſhment of the promiſes; it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promiſed, and thou haſt believed ſhal be told down to you, as it were in one ſum, *principal* and *intereſt*; as is clear from *Heb.* 2. 3. where he poſitively aſſerteth, *that the viſion will come, and will not*

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tarry. There is indeed a pleasant seeming contradiction in that *verse*, he had said before, *then the vision would tarry*, and yet here he saith, *that the vision will not tarry, but will surely come*, in which ye may see the Divinity both of *sense* and *faith*, and that noble contradiction that is between their assertions, *sense* asserteth, that the promise doth tarry too long, and *faith* crieth out, it will surly come, it will not tarry, which is set down, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.* 4. Promises that come unto us through the most strong and lively exercise of Faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are most relishing and sweet, and those mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is some what pointed at in *Isai.* 25. 9. where the Church crieth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation.* Their waiting and expecting of the promise to be accomplished in its time, is there the fountain of their song, and of their spiritual joy, I think sometimes a Christian is like that misbelieving Lord, 2 *Kings* 7. 2. that though they meet with the accomplishment of a promise, yet they do not taste of the sweetness that is in it, because they did not believe the word of the Lord.

The second duty that we would press from what we have spoken, is that Christians would close with the promises for their everlasting Inheritance since promises of the Covenant *are exceeding great*, and *exceeding precious*, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unspeakable, O! should not these things proclaim aloud unto us, *close with the promises as your portion for ever?* I think, one that hath a right to the promises, and hath entered himself Heir unto the vast Inheritance, he may sometimes rejoyce in that threefold mystery of the Gospel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other than a contradiction 1. He may say sometimes, *I have nothing*, and yet *I possess all things*; for when he looketh unto his Beeing in the world he is a poor *Lazarus*, having no place whereon to lay his head; but when he casteth his eye upon his spiri-

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ritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his Treaſure, and is conſtrained to cry out, *I poßeſs all things.* 2. Sometimes he may cry forth, *I am rich*, and yet I am *exceeding poor:* he may be rich in hopes, and yet poor in his poſſeſſions. There is much of a Chriſtians Treaſure that lyeth in hope, hope is that Thing that will make the Chriſtian ſweetly quite all other in compariſon of that: That is the Motto of the Chriſtian, *ſpero meliora*; which he holdeth up in his flag, even in the greateſt ſtorm, and at length he findeth it true, that hope *maketh not aſhamed.* 3. Sometime the Chriſtian will cry forth, *I am always ſorrowing*, and yet *always rejoycing*: when he caſteth his eye upon himſelf, he will ſit down and water his couch with Tears; but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jeſus Chriſt, *he will rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* A Chriſtian can both weep and rejoyce at one time, and again he can *rejoyce and weep.* No doubt, the reflecting upon the immenſe hope, and that everlaſting crown, will make a Chriſtian rejoyce under all his diſquietments and anxieties in the world, he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious inheritance. Chriſtians have an eye of an Eagle, that can behold and diſcern things afar off.

The third duty that we would preſs upon you, is, to long for the day, when all the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace ſhall receive their compleat accompliſhment, and when ye be entered into the everlaſting fruition of all the Things wherein your bleſſedneſs lyeth. There is a Threefold *come* that Chriſt ſpeaketh to the ſoul that is united unto him, all which they ſweetly obey. There is that firſt *come* which is in Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are wearie and heavie loaden.* And there is that ſecond *come*, Iſai. 26. *Come, my people, enter into thy chambers*, which is to entertain that excellent correſpondency with him in troubleſome times. And there is that third matchleſs *come*, when Chriſt ſhall ſay to his own in the day of their ſtanding before the Tribunal, *Come, O bleſſed of my Father*: Shall we ſay it, That if we had *faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we

would cry forth, *Why is his chariot so long in coming*; and did we reliſh, or made a high account of the matchleſs promiſes of the boundleſs Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ſhips of deſire.* I ſhal ſay no more but this, Chriſt *is gone up with a ſhout* unto the Heaven, and ſhal come again with the *ſound of a Trumpet, ſing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes unto our God, ſing praiſes.*

The *laſt* thing that we would preſs upon you, is, That ye would mark the time of the Accompliſhment of the Pomiſes; And as to this, I ſhal ſay but theſe: 1. That ordinarly the time of the Accompliſhment of the promiſes, is the time when ſenſe, reaſon, and probability doth moſt contradict them: this is clear, *Ezek.* 37. in the fulfilling of the promiſes that were paſt to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were as a *valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. *verſe* of that *Chapter* compared with the 12. And 2. That the time of the Accompliſhment of the Promiſes, ordinarly, is from *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. and from *Jer.* 29. 12. compared a praying time: this is alſo clear with the 10 and the 12. Thus ſaith the Lord, the time when he will viſit them, and perform his good word to them, in cauſing them to return, it ſhal be a time when they ſhal *call upon me and ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them.* And 3. The time of the Accompliſhment of his Promiſes, it is a time when our thoughts of the promiſes are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies, this is a a ſign that our mercy is near, and it bringeth forth: however it is our duty to wait on him who can give a Beeing unto his Word, and ſweetly perform his promiſes: we ought not to limit infinite Wiſdom, nor to ſay unto him that is infinite in ſtrength, *How can ſuch a thing be?* but anſwer all Objections of misbelief with this, God hath ſpoken it, and he will alſo do it, and draw all Objections of misbelief in that glo-

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rious and myſterious Name of His *I Am that I Am*, To Him be praiſe.

Some Sermons

I. SERMON VI. Concern

Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgivenneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are Sanctified, by Faith that is in me.*

WHen firſt we did begin our diſcourſe upon the precious and excellent Grace of Faith; We told you that we intended to ſpeak of it under a two-fold notion and conſideration. Firſt as it layeth hold upon Chriſt for Juſtification; and of this we have ſpoken to you at ſome length, as ye have heard. *Secondly*, As it cloſeth with Chriſt for Sanctification; and of this we are to ſpeak of it, which are a part of that excellent Oration and Diſcourſe that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own Defence; In which Oration and Diſcourſe of his, ye may behold theſe Four things eminently ſhining. 1. That godlineſs and good manners are not inconſiſtent, nor contrary one to another. Therefore ye will ſee in the *ſecond* and *third verſes* of this *Chapter*, *Paul* acting the part of a Courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being ſeven days in the School of Chriſt; than by being ſeven years in all the Courts of *France*. This, *ſecondly*, That innocent Policy, he made uſe of in the deliverance of this Oration; which likewiſe doth appear in the *ſecond* and *third verſes* of this *Chapter*, where he endeavours to inſinuate and ingratiate himſef in the favours of the perſon before whom he had ſtood; I confeſs, piety is the beſt Policy that is taken up in entertaining piety, howbeit, true policy may move in one Orb and Sphere with pie-

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ty, and the one is not contrary to the other in some case. 3. This shineth in that discourse, even the spiritual boldness *Paul* had, in giving an excellent confession of his Faith, and the declaring him to be God, even Jesus Christ in whom he did believe; *Christ witnessed a glorious confession before Pontius Pilat* for him, and he would witness a glorious *confession* from *Agrippa* for Christ; That since Christ had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Christ in this day; and this is from the beginning, and all alongs. Lastly. This shineth in the words that *Paul* doth set forth, the matchless freedom and unspeakable riches of Christ; not only toward himself, in that he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him; but likewise towards the Gentiles, to whom he was sent as a Preacher, & that he did gloriously condescend to visit the dark places of the earth, and to have *the morning and the day spring from on high*, arising on the habitations of cruelty. And in this Verse which we have read, you may behold these five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel, for attaining of which, Ministers are made Instruments under God. The first is, *to open the eyes of the blind*, which in short is even this, to give those that are ignorant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep Mysteries of the Father and of the Son: so that from this, ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omnipotency, in producing effects of the power of nature.

The second we may see in these words, *to remove them from darkness to light*; which importeth these two: 1. The removing of persons from an estate of misery, unto an estate of excellent joy. 2. The removing of persons from an estate of iniquity, unto an estate of holiness: *darkness* in Scripture pointeth out sin, and *light* in Scripture pointeth out holiness. 3. The bringing us *from under the power of Satan unto God*, the making a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, That these who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love, That those who were under the bondage

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of ſin, may be under the ſweet obedience of Chriſt, *whoſe yoke is eaſie, and whoſe burden is light,* Mat. 11.30. 4. That perſons may receive *the remiſſion of ſin, and the forgiveneſs of their iniquitie.* This is the great voice of the Goſpel, *Come to a crucified Chriſt, come to a pardoning Chriſt, come to a glorified Chriſt, hath the pardon of iniquity in his own hand, and riches of himſelf in the other*; and theſe are the great Motives by which he ſtudieth to perſwade us to come. And the laſt is in the cloſe of the Verſe, *That perſons may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by Faith that is in me*; That is, That they may have a ſhare of that glorious Manſion, of that excellent Kingdom that Chriſt hath purchaſed, and hath gone before to prepare. And withal, in this Verſe as the words are ſet down, ye may ſee the excellent and orderly Method that the Goſpel keepeth in conquering ſouls, and you may ſee theſe excellent Allurements, theſe perſwaſive Arguments that Chriſt holdeth forth to conquer you: as it were, Chriſt cometh not to us cloathed with the Robes of Majeſty, but cloathed with the Robes of Love and Advantage, knowing that in this poſture, he ſhall moſt gain upon our hearts.

Now in ſpeaking unto that laſt end of the preaching of the Goſpel, we ſhall only according to our preſent purpoſe, take notice of this one Thing from it, (not intending to proſecute it, as it is an end of the Goſpel) but as it is a Property of Faith: and it is that, *Faith in Jeſus Chriſt hath a noble excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holineſs. They are ſanctified,* ſaith he, *through faith in me.* We ſhall not ſtand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from *Act.* 15. 9 where the Apoſtle telleth us of *purifieing our hearts by faith*; and likewiſe 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. where a pure heart and Faith unfeigned, they are joyned and linked together. As likewiſe 1 John 3 3. *Every man that hath his hope in him, he purifieth himſelf.* All the Graces of the Goſpel, they are linked

ed together by a Golden and unſeparable Chain, ſo that he that obtaineth one, he ſhal obtain all; yea more, all the graces of the Goſpel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, ſo that we may compare them unto *Hypocrates* twins, of whom it was reported they did laugh and weep together, and they did grow together, even ſo when one grace doth rejoyce, the reſt doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the reſt doth alſo mourn with it, and when one grace doth grow, the reſt of the graces of the Spirit they do likewiſe grow apace.

There are only Three particulars that we ſhal inſiſt a little upon: Firſt, We ſhal ſhew you how Faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in theſe reſpects.

1. In that it diſcovereth to the Soul that matchleſs excellency, that tranſcendent beauty, and that ſurpaſſing comlineſs that is in Chriſt, which ſight doth exceedingly perſwade the Soul to draw that concluſion, *What have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious ſight of Chriſt, and acquaintance with him, maketh us loſe our acquaintance with our idols; and when once we are united unto Chriſt by Faith, we break that union we had with them: And indeed the want of the knowledge of the excellent comlineſs that is in Chriſt, and of love to him, is the great occaſion that the pooreſt deities and idols in the world taketh up your hearts: did ye but once ſee him who is that *glorious Sun of righteouſneſs*, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen* unto that excellent Confeſſion of Faith, *Eccl.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of ſpirit.*

In that it is the grace that diſcovers unto a Chriſtian the ſpotleſs holineſs of Chriſt, Faith doth not only diſcover the beauty of Chriſt, but likewiſe his holineſs, and this doth make a Soul fall in love with that excellent thing *Sanctification* It is recorded amongſt the firſt ſteps to ſin and miſery, that we deſire to

to be as God, knowing good and evil: but certainly it is amonſt the firſt ſteps to life and happineſs, when the ſoul deſireth to be holy, as he is holy: And I ſuppoſe this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a bleſſed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the bleſſed Image of Chriſt, ye know not the beauty of holineſs.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jeſus Chriſt, and draweth ſtrength and vertue from him for the conquering of luſts, & in raiſing us up into a bleſſed conformity unto himſelf; when the Chriſtian is weak, Faith is that noble correſpondent between that emptineſs that is in us, and the fulneſs that is in Chriſt, Faith is that noble correſpondent between that weakneſs that is in us, and that everlaſting ſtrength that is in him: Therefore, there are two noble and excellent counſels of Faith: *Firſt*, It counſels us not to lean to our own ſtrength; And *Secondly*, To have our recourſe unto him whoſe Name is *JEHOVAH* that *everlaſting ſtrength*; And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Chriſt by faith, that prophecy ſhould be accompliſhed, *I will make the feeble ones as David, and David as the Angels of God*; and when a Chriſtian is is moſt diffident in himſelf, then God ſhould prove himſelf to be Almighty, and all-ſufficient.

And, 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promiſes, and doth believe them: and believing of the promiſes bringeth forth that noble birth *conformity to God*; according to that Word upon which we were ſpeaking, 2. *Pet.* 1. 4. by believing the promiſes (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith alſo believeth the threatnings that are paſt in Scripture againſt ſin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and ſtrong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification; Faith ſtrengtheneth the Chriſtian, againſt the committing of iniquity with theſe two

words, that word, *Rom.* 6. 20. *O soul* (saith Faith) commit not iniquity, for *the Wages of sin is death*; and that Word, *Rev.* 21. last. *There shall in no ways enter into that City any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity.* And be perswaded of it, that the Faith of the Threatnings, and of the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord, not easily broken, to restrain you from the acting of iniquity; And shall I tell you briefly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours do commit iniquity with so little fear, and with so much delight, it is even this, because we believe not the threatnings of God, which shal be accomplished in their own season; for is it possible that if ye believed that word, *Rev* 21. last *That nothing shall enter into the New Jerusalem that defileth or worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie*; that ye durst for a world adventure upon the committing of iniquity, as ye do? And I shal only say to such that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming, when they shal be constrained to cry out, *He hath spoken it, and he hath done it, and faithful is he.* There is not one jot nor title in the Word of the Lord that shal fall to the ground, And believe it, God will be faithful in the accomplishment of his threatnings as he is faithful in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discoveth unto a Christian the noble excellencies, and those spiritual dignities that are in that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints in light; Faith (as it were) carrieth up the soul to the top of *Pisgah*, of which, it is admitted to behold the *promised land*, and truly the seeing of those noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them study holiness, since they know that there is an impossibility for one to attain to that estate without holiness, because he had said it, *without holiness no man shall see God.* O then, if once ye saw Heaven ye would be constrained to walk in that path of Sanctification, since it is the glorious way by which ye must walk in through the gates of that blessed City, but ye know not the excellency

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that is there, it is a fancy and notion unto you: and the ground that ye do not ſtudy to conform your ſelves unto that bleſſed image of God. And I would only ask you this one queſtion, is it poſſible that ſuch a deluſion as this can overtake you, as to think, that you who never ſtudied holineſs on earth, ſhall yet enter into Heaven gates? I know that there are ſome that ſay in their hearts, *I ſhall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart*: and many more that ſuppoſe that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the eſtate of nature, and be compleat in the eſtate of Grace, all in one day: But why will you deceive your ſelves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* Or is there but this one ſtep between hell and Heaven? O remember, though nothing be impoſſible with God, yet there was but one thief ſaved upon the croſs.

6 Faith hath the influence upon the attaining of holineſs in this reſpect, that it believeth the exceeding great advantages that are promiſed unto the perſon that ſtudieth holineſs. Faith believeth that word, Matthew 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of the excellent ſayings, and maketh the Chriſtian endeavour to attain unto a likneſs and conformity with him, ſo that he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian the ſinfulneſs of ſin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exerciſe of the Grace of Faith. And I will give you theſe three grounds why Faith compleatly diſcovereth the ſinfulneſs of ſin.

1. Faith letteth us ſee the perſon againſt whom we commit this ſin, and that doth exceedingly agredge ſin; for when the Chriſtian is admitted to behold God, and to ſee that matchleſs excellency that is in him, then (ſaith he) what a beaſt was I to offend ſuch a glorious Majeſty as he? what a fool was I to kick againſt the pricks, or to enter in the liſts with ſuch an infinite God?

2. Faith letteth a Christian see these excellent obligations of love that Christ hath imposed upon us; Faith letteth us see the antient and everlasting love of Christ; Faith is that grace that letteth us see his sufferings, Faith letteth us see all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Christian to cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwise?* And no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the study of his duty, he would be less in contradicting debt, and were you but seriously taken up in that study of these two great Registers; 1. The Register in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded: And, 2. That Register in which all your acts of offending precious Christ are written, ye would be astonished and ashamed to see so much forgiven you, and durst not sin any more; there ye would see infinite mercy *desiring to rejoyce over judgment*; and there ye would see the spotless riches of that transcendent grace that is in Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second thing that we shal speak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining Sanctification, shal be to enquire a little into these things that hinder even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith; for some Christians there are, that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith; making use of Christ for sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by Faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither doth raise them up to a conformity with God; so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*; and when they fight and do not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope.*

The first ground of such a dispensation is, That a Christian is not constant in his actings of Faith; he will be strong in faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he

he will faint in the exercise, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith; for when Faith hath gotten its advantages, they lose them through security and negligence, that is a command that should be continually obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant acting of Faith, he should sometimes sing you that song, *I trusted in God, and I was helped.*

Secondly, The most part of Christians, they are not strong and vigorous in actings of their Faith, their Faith is exceedingly weak, and so they cannot bring forth these noble fruits and effects of Faith. If we were trusting in God with all our hearts, then that promise, *Psal* 37. 5. should be accomplished unto us, *trust in the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass. Thirdly*, There is a strong heart-conjunction, and soul-union between us and our idols: we are joyned to our idols, and therefore we cannot be easily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war against them, there is a Procurator within, that cryeth, *O spare this little one, or this profitable* or *pleasant* one, and this is ordinarly our practice, to spare the choisest of our lusts, so that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitterness of death is past.* But I confess, if that union were one dissolved, we should then be heard with greatest earnestness to cry forth, *O blessed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight. Fourthly*, Sometimes a Christian layeth too much weight upon the actings of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith, but as an instrument to which Christ must bestow strength to conquer. Sometimes we think that Faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand, but remember, Faith is but an empty thing without Christ, as you may see, *Acts* 15. 9. where the *purifying their hearts by faith*, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, so that the activity of faith is from him, and not in it self. *Fifthly*, A Christian doth not hate sin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his lusts, and with these strong idols that are

within him, but here is a secret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppose: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Christian; Sometimes his light will cry, mortifie such an idol, and yet his heart will cry out, O spare such an idol, yea more, sometimes his heart will cry, O spare such an idol. Yea more, sometimes his heart will cry, mortifie such an idol, and yet his heart will cry, O spare such an idol. That is to say, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of sin, Rom. 11. *Abhor that which is evil*; the word is in the Original, hate evil as ye would do hell, that is, have perfect hatred to sin, O to hate as much as hell; and joyn that word, Eph. 5.11. *Reprove the unfaithful works of darkness*, or as the word may be rendered, *make out by unanswerable arguments*, to your temptations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitful works of darkness, convince your temptations that ye cannot do it; As we suppose, it was a noble arguing of *Joseph* when he was tempted, *How shall I do this?* he puts the temptation (as it were) to it: O temptation! give me one ground why I should commit such an iniquity. And certainly, if we were thus reasoning with our temptations, they should flee before us; But the truth is, we imbrace the desire of our temptation upon implicite Faith. It is a sad regrate, and yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God, as they do by Satan, we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these allurments he setteth forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God upon every thing. *Sixthly*, A Christian promoveth not in the growth of Sanctification, though in some measure exercising Faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being clothed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draught of the Image of Christ engraven upon our hearts

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we would have more victory over our lusts. There is a command for *a perfect love* to that which is good, and holiness in that same place, *Rom.* 12. 9. and *cleave* (saith he) *to that which is good:* or, as the word may be rendered, *be married and glewed* to that which is good, let there be an unseparable and indissolvable knot of union between you and that which is good. And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavour more to be clothed with it; but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made *like God.* O will ye think on it: What a thing is it for you who are the dust of his feet, to be made conform to him? *Seventhly,* a Christian is not much in the exercise of other duties that should go along with Faith, suspect that faith for presumption, that can act, and be maintained without Prayer, certainly Prayer it keepeth in the life of Faith, Prayer, it is that grace that must act mutually with Faith, in accomplishing that blessed work of Sanctification; and if we prayed more, and believed more, then we should have more to speak concerning the victory over our lusts. When was it, O Christian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was constrained to put up an *Ebenezer,* and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me?* When was it, O Christian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath arisen, and mine enemies are scattered before my face?* I will tell you what is your practice, ye make such a Covenant with your idols, as *Nahash* did with the men of *Jabesh-Gilead,* 1 *Sam.* 11. 23. your lusts desire to make you pluck out your right eyes, and there is nothing your lusts will command you, but almost ye will obey; but would you send out prayers as a Messenger to tell the King of such tyrrany, ye should know better what it is to be victorious. There is such a Covenant between the graces of the Spirit, especially between Faith and Prayer (if so we may allude) as was made between *Joab* and

Abiſhai, 2 *Sam.* 10. 11. one grace, as it were, ſaith to another, if I be weak, *come over and help me*, and if ye be weak, *I will come and help you*, when one grace is like to fall in battel, then another cometh and helpeth it: when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in, and ſweetly helpeth faith; when love is beginning to die, and wax cold in the ſight, then faith cometh in and putteth life in love; and when patience is like to fail and be overcome, then faith comes in and ſpeaks that word to patience, *Wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Oftentimes our patience and our ſenſe, they joyn together, for when ſenſe ſpeaketh good things, patience is in life; but when once ſenſe preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and faith muſt then maintain and uphold it.

The *Third* thing that we ſhal ſpeak as to Faiths influence upon Sanctification, ſhal be to draw theſe four concluſions from the point.

The *Firſt* is, That ye may know from this the riſe and original of your little ſucceſs over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this queſtion: O, What is the ground that I get not victory over my luſts: and they propoſe that queſtion to Chriſt, that once the Diſciples propoſed to him, *Why was it that I could not caſt out ſuch a devil?* And I can give no other anſwer than Chriſt gave to them, it is becauſe ye have not faith, *For if ye had faith as a grain of muſtardſeed*, ye might ſay unto your idols, depart from us, and they ſhould obey you, and there ſhould not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven, but if ye had faith, it ſhould be rolled away, and become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols is, that they are not much in the exerciſe of Faith; ſometimes ye enter in the liſts with your luſts in your own ſtrength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do ever enter in the liſts having ſome Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one ſtroak.

I will tell you six things, which if Faith overcome, it keepeth the field, and maketh the Christian sing a song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First. Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome that Idol of Impatience and Discontent; some never meet with a discouragement, but they cry out, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* They are soon put to the end of their patience: now Faith can overcome such an Idol. And I will tell you three excellent things that Faith performeth to the soul under Impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. 1. Faith telleth the Christian, *there is an end, and their expectation shall not be cut off*; Faith telleth there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the midnight of trouble: Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, and how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break, and their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have: if ye lose your son, or your choicest contentment in the world, Faith will say such a word as *Elkana* said to *Hanah*, 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Is not Christ better to thee than ten sons?* The choicest contentments ye can lose, (that is Faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them; and so this maketh the soul to be ashamed of their Impatiency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise Dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see, that there is not a Dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends, it hath our advantage as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end; and there is not a Dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark Dispensation, let Faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations; for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not chast-

ning in love, but punishing me with the wound of an enemy, but Faith will prophesie good things to you in the darkest night.

The *second* next great idol that Faith will bring low, is this idol of covetousness and desire to the things of the world. I think that word, *Eccles.* 3. 11. was never so much accomplished as it is in these days, and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*, that is the idol that dwelleth and lodgeth within you; yea, the world it hath your first thoughts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night, yea more, it hath your thoughts when you are at prayer, and when you are at preaching; yea, it hath such a dominion over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new Bible, and in all the ten Commands scrapeth out the Name of God, and setteth down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other gods but me*, the world saith, *Thou shalt have no other gods but me*, &c. But Faith will bring this idol low, and soon let you see the vanity and emptiness of it; yea, Faith would let you see a more noble object, and withal, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies; and I am perswaded of this, that if ye could win to shake hands with cold death every day, and say, thou at last shall be my Prince, and shall be the King to whom I shall be a Subject; and if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie these pursuits after the world; and I shall say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain always such thoughts of the world, as he shall have when he is standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity. I shall say it, and believe it, O worldling, and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come, that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the world, as those that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that Faith will bring low, is that idol of *self-love*, and *self indulgence*, that which is the great

great mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be ſaid againſt that idol of ſelf-love, and ſelf-indulgence, than that which is in 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. were ſufficient; that among all the great idols of theſe latter times, this is put in the firſt place, *they ſhall be lovers of themſelves*: we cannot take pains for Chriſt, we cannot go about the exerciſe of any duty, becauſe that idol of ſelf-indulgence forbiddeth us: I will tell you its counſel and great advice it giveth you, *O perſon pity thy ſelf*; that ſame counſel *Peter* gave to his Maſter, it biddeth you pity your ſelf: but if ye could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *deſtroy your ſelf*; *for ſelf-indulgence and ſelf-love*, is that which will ruine you. O! What bleſſed attainments of God, what bleſſed fruition of Jeſus Chriſt, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God hath that idol of ſelf-indulgence obſtructed, and not only utterly ruined even in the beſt? I think, if once ye could ſet your foot upon that idol, the reſt ſhould fall apace; that is the *General* of all the forces of your luſts, and it is a *Saul*, the head higher than all the reſt of your idols within you.

The fourth idol that Faith can ſubdue, is ſelf righteouſneſs; This is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteouſneſs, and ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; the great ground of it is, That there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of Works, and we never deſire to be much obliged to any other, we cannot ſubmit our ſelves to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

The fifth great idol that Faith can ſubdue, is that of *pleaſure*, the world and the attainments of it; *pleaſure* is the great idol that many worſhip and adore. There are ſome that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleaſures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low ſuch an idol; for Faith diſcovereth to a ſoul more excellent pleaſures, more ſweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun; Faith maketh a Chriſtian loſe his taſte unto all things

things that are here below; Faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold these passing vanities, these transient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is, That as Faith helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages Faith hath by the growth and exercise of Sanctification. 1. It is a noble evidence of Faith, and maketh a Christian to be perswaded that he is settled upon the Rock, and that his Interest in God is made sure. Sanctification is that which will help a Christian daily to read his Interest in God; This is clear from Jam. 2. 18. *I will shew thee my faith by my works*: where this is clearly holden forth, That a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, he can upon all times, give an extract of his Faith, and as it were, discover it, and shew it to the World. 2. Sanctification maketh Faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, Jam. 2. 22. *And by works was faith made perfect.* There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to Faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification; for not only is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth such a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a Believer, but it also receiveth strength and power; Faith is not of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth; but on the contrary, if Faith bring forth an hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day, it groweth strong; and this is further clear, 2 Pet. 1. 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful.* And from that other word, *Jam.* 2. where it is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone:* If Faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigor; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, ye would no doubt, attain to a noble and lively acting of that grace of Faith And lastly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of Faith: Sometimes

times Faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting: but Faith and a pure Conscience joyned together, they make an excellent Feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Thirdly, We may draw this conclusion, if Faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, and helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then I say, there are many that their Faith is a delusion, and *their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web.* There are some that have Faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall not that Faith unquestionably *perish as a dream, and evanish as the vision of the night?* And therefore, if ye would testifie the reality of your Faith, then study more the work of Sanctification. I shall but from *Job.* 8. 14, 15. give you these eight properties of a Hypocrites Faith and Hope, which may make you try and examine your self. 1. Their Hope and their Faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an Act of fooliſhness under Heaven, as a Hypocrites hope, because it is but a Castle in the Air, and as writing to himself a Charter on the sand: so that word ye have rendered, *Whose hope shall be cut off*, is in the original, *whose folly shall be cut off*; shewing this, That they build without a Foundation, and so their Faith must be most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for, shall at last loath them: O Hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Christ, but be perswaded of it, Christ shall eternally loath you, and ye shall eternally loath Christ; That is clear in that same word, *whose hope shall be cut off*, or as the word may be read, *whose hope shall loath them*; the thing he hopeth for shall loath him, and Christ shall say, *Depart, I know you not.* 3. And though ye have now much delight and pleasure in the actings of your presumptuous hope, yet at last, ye shall loath that hope; the word will carry, that not only the things ye hoped for shall loath you, but ye likewise shall loath your hope. The day is coming that ye shall cry forth, cursed be the day that

ever

ever I believed that I should get Heaven. 4. It shall at last be the matter of his vexation, from that word, *whose hope shall be cut off*, or as the word may be rendered, *whose hope shall vex him.* O! when the Hypocrites shall meet with that anxious, that dreadful disappointment one day, they shall then put their hand on their head, being ashamed because of their confidence. 5. He studyeth by all means to keep his hope, though it be but false: therefore have ye that word in the 15 verse, *he holdeth it fast*; or as the word is, *he keepeth it with hand and arm, with all his strength* he keepeth his hope: so that if Christ would come from Heaven, and say, *man*, thou art an Hypocrite, *and thy hope shall be cut off*, they would say, I would keep my hope, Sir, and maintain it, and that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation; I love never a Faith that in this side of time is unchangeable, and never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built always upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *he shall lean upon his house*, which we suppose may be interpreted thus, he shall lean upon his *worldly enjoyments*, or upon these spiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of a Hypocrite is never built upon Christ, and so unquestionably that hope shall be cut off, and evanish. 6. Let Hypocrites hold fast their hope with both their arms, I will say these three words to them; First, if all the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you shall be separate, as it is in that word, *Your hope shall depart from you*, and ye shall quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to death, and no further; according to that word, Job. 18. 14. *Whose hope shall bring them to the king of terrours*: Will it bring me no further say you? O! no, *The king of terrours shall separate you and your hope.* Thirdly. The day is coming, when the Foundation of it shall be discovered, and there shall not be a delusion, but it shall be unfolded. The day is approaching, when Christ shall ask how you got your

Faith,

Faith, and how you maintained it? 7. The Hypocrites hope is a poor building, it is a *Spiders web*, which I conceive (without being critick) is this: The hope of hypocrites, they ſpin it out of their own bowels, they have it not from Chriſt, but as ye ſee a ſpider ſpun out of its own bowels, ſo they do out of themſelves, it is no better ſtuff than their own rotten righteouſneſs; Chriſt never begat thoſe unto a lively hope. Let me beſeech you therefore, that by all means ye would ſtudy to make ſure your Intereſt in God, and to build your Faith on him, whoſe Name is that *munition of rocks*: For believe it, I may ſay it with much perſwaſion, I know there are many that ſhall once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful diſappointment: and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending thoſe that preſumptuouſly take hold of a hope, before Chriſt take hold of them, ſtudy to ſearch your hope what it is: I deſire not to raze any Foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Chriſt, but would deſire, and charge you to raze the Foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would preſs theſe three things upon you. Firſt, O! Ye that are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and that know not what it is to imbrace the offers of the everlaſting Goſpel: obey that excellent counſel, 2 Chron. 30. 8. *Give Chriſt your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yield your ſelf to the Lord*, it is in the original, *Give your hand to God*, wich is in ſhort, *Marry him*, and be content to *Contract* your ſelf to him, for believe it, the day is coming, that either that Contract between you and Chriſt, ſhall be eternally confirmed, or that contract between the devil and you, ſhall be eternally ratified. And I ſuppoſe, there is much ſpoken to the commendation of that noble Plant of Renown, that ye may take Chriſt (if ſo we may ſpeak) blindly, ye may cloſe your eyes and take him, for he ſhall never diſappoint your hope; for let you think of him to eternity, he ſhall always be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earneſtly deſire you once to ſearch

and try what was the firſt riſe of your Faith in Jeſus Chriſt: I am perſwaded of it, there are many that take up their Faith at their foot, they never travelled in pain, and yet Faith is brought forth. Is not this a myſtery? Shall it be ſaid, *before they travelled they brought forth?* I do not queſtion, but there may be leſſer and greater pangs of the new birth; but this is moſt certain, there is always ſome either leſſer Troubles or greater, till that child be brought forth: and yet I may condemn theſe that *ſtay too long in the place of the breaking forth of children.* Chriſt will never refuſe you, when ye do really come; becauſe ye have not been ſo many years and days Impriſoned to the Law. Thirdly, Let me deſire you to go and ask, is there a grave between you and Heaven, in all that way through which the Saints have travelled, upon which this is written, *here lyeth a man that ſincerely ſought life from Chriſt, and he denied him?* I think, without encroaching too much upon the ſearching forth of the exerciſe of the Saints in Heaven, I think we may ſuppoſe, there may be in Heaven ſome *Queries* and Interrogations; Chriſt ſhall ask, O! beloved, Did ye want any thing here below when ye were ſent forth to travel in the world? And ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *No*: Chriſt ſhall ask that Queſtion at you, Did I not all things well? And ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *Yes*: Chriſt ſhall propoſe that Queſtion, Are ye not well rewarded for all your pains? And ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *Yes.* O! but to take him: He is the bleſſed and moſt excellent one in Heaven and earth: it is the beſt Bargain that ever ye made. O! ye Merchants that have made many excellent Bargains to your own apprehenſions, will ye come and make an excellent Bargain yet, that will make you eternally up And what is that? Come and *buy Chriſt*, and take him for nothing; this is not your ordinary bargaining. There is few comes to you, and biddeth you buy excellent things *without money*; but come in the Goſpel, and ye ſhall get Chriſt *without money.* O! Nigards that are loath

to

to ſpend your money in the world, will ye come to Chriſt and believe on him, take him freely: O! ſay ye, if I could get three things of Chriſt, I would come. 1. I would have much gold and ſilver: I ſay come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get much gold and ſilver: Is that true? It is abundantly true; See *Job* 22. 22. 25, 26 where preſſing that exhortation, *Acquaint thy ſelf with God*, and uſing many arguments, he ſaith, *Thou ſhalt lay up gold as duſt, and the gold of Ophir as the ſtones of the brooks:* Is not that Gold enough? Yea, ye ſhall have ſilver likewiſe, *Thou ſhalt have plenty of ſilver.* In the 26 *verſe*, ye ſhall not only have gold and ſilver, but ye ſhall have *plenty of it*, and ſhall have the moſt excellent and refined gold. But O! ſay ye, what, will that promiſe be literally accompliſhed to me, if I come to Chriſt? I would only ſay theſe three things to thee; 1. Come to Chriſt, and if gold and ſilver be for thy advantage, thou ſhalt have it literally accompliſhed. 2. I ſay, ye ſhall have as much contentment in Jeſus Chriſt, as if ye had this houſe full of gold. 3. I will ſay this to thee, Chriſt ſhall be thy gold and ſilver, according to that word in the 26 verſe, which is moſt remarkable; yea, *the Almighty ſhall be thy defence*; or as it is in the original, ſhall be thy *gold*, ſpeaking of the promiſe of gold before. Secondly, Ye ſay, I would ſay this, that what I purpoſe might be accompliſhed, I ſay, come to Chriſt and ye ſhall have that likewiſe, Job 22. 28. *Thou ſhalt decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed unto thee*; which I conceive, doth not only take in theſe ſpiritual decrees, but likewiſe theſe that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (ſay ye) and I would come to Chriſt, and it is, That I might have all the deſires of my heart; I ſay, O man, and O woman, come to Chriſt, and thou ſhalt have what thou deſireſt; this is clear from Pſ. 37. 4. *Delight thy ſelf in God, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart.* What can ye have man but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Chriſt? He putteth a blank in your hand, and ſaith that

word

word which is ſaid to *Solomon*, *Aſk*, What would ye have, and I ſhall give you? Chriſt as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean ſheet of Paper, and he deſireth you to ask what ye would have, and is not this an excellent bargain? O! Nigard, what would ye have which ye will not get in Chriſt? And be perſwaded, that ye that refuſe and will not take him, the eternal curſe of all that is in Heaven will return upon thy head, the eternal curſe of all the expectants of Heaven, and Heirs of Life, will return upon the head of that perſon that will not take Chriſt. And curſed, curſed ſhall that perſon be, who will not take Chriſt, and one day *all the Congregation* in Heaven and earth, ſhall ſay, *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith? prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Aſſurance is a precious gift, which many that live in theſe days do undervalue, and tread under foot; do not the Chriſtians of theſe times, go halting between two Opinions, being neither poſitive that they are received *into the adoption of children*, nor yet poſitive that they are yet in a ſtate of alienation, and *enemies in their mind by wicked works*; yea, and (that which is worſe) there are many among us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they purſue more to ſatisfie their ſenſe for the preſent, nor to have a ſolid well grounded aſſurance for the time to come: I could wiſh that all the debates and queſtions of theſe days, that take up ſo much of our time, and ſo much of our ſpirits from better things, were happily drowned in theſe four excellent queſtions, which without controverſie, are of greateſt concernment for all to have reſolved. 1. Where ſhall

I rest all night, when the long shadows of the everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon me, and whether or not hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2. It is a soul concerning question, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* To be asking at him that can sweetly resolve you.

And 3 Not to rest there, but to be crying forth in the morning, *What shall I do to be saved?* And to be crying out in the evening, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

4. It is sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the Revolutions of States and Kingdoms.

But I suppose it were better to ask, what news from Heaven concerning thy self? And what news from within, and news of thy Bridegrooms coming? For these are great Courts, I mean the Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience, the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavour much to know.

5. It is a soul concerning question, that a Christian should be much in proposing to himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?*

It is certain, we must say that our Faith and Assurance, and all our other mercies are from him: And yet alace, we are negligent in praises, we may with *Tamar*, rent our Garments of *divers colours*, even the *garments of the Kings daughters*, because of spiritual whordom against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length, of the precious and fundamental grace of Faith, we have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon these words we have now read, concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith.

The Apostle in this Chapter, is vindicating his Ministry and Apostleship, from the contempt that was cast upon it, he proveth he was a Minister of the New Testament, called and sent of God by the blessing and success he had among them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed

threshed in vain, and they being so much in censuring his way, and seeking an account of his Ministry: In these words he doth as it were, draw them off by a holy diversion unto another business, as if he had said to them, *O Corinthians, I will divert you from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable.* Be much in judging and examining your selves; and indeed it is a Truth worth our Observation, That if we were more in judging of our selves, we would be less in judging others; but alas, there are some of us, we are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable.

First. That there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance that he is in the Faith, and hath an Interest in Christ, *by being in the Faith*; here is not to be understood a being in *the Doctrine of Faith* only, but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed and really united to Christ by Faith.

Secondly. The seeking after assurance is a necessary commanded duty: for ye see here the words are very imperative, *Examine your selves, prove your selves.*

Thirdly. That there are many mistakes and delusions among people, concerning that noble and excellent thing *Assurance*, there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shall once discountenance and sweep away, like *a spiders web*; and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*, or as the word may be rendered, *Take an accurate and an experimented search of your selves, try your selves*, or *prove your selves*; It is a word that is borrowed from the Gold smiths fining and trying of Gold: And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do pass a decree in their own favours, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them.

Fourthly. Take notice of this from the words, that there

there is much, and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the Faith or no; This is imported in his doubling the exhortation.

Fifthly. That one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining Assurance, whether we be in the Faith or no; is self-examination, and putting our self to the Tryal; as if he had said, would ye have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse we intend not to handle.

As to the first, That there is such a thing attainable, I shall only propose these reasons unto you to make it evident. 1. It is known in Scripture, That the Saints of old, have in an ordinary way, attained to distinct perswasion of their Interest in Christ. Song 6. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* And Rom. 8. 38 *I am perswaded* (saith the Apostle) *that neither death nor life*, &c. *shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ.* And 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.*

2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to shew how Christians may attain to assurance. 1 Joh. 1. 13. *These things I write unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of *John* writing in these Epistles, is to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many commands in Scripture, for Christians to be serious in searching after Assurance. 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Wherefore brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

4. It is the blessed end of Gods oath in the everlasting Covenant, that a Christian might get Assurance.

What was the great ground and great end, that God confirmed his Covenant with an Oath? Was it not Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.*

5. If

5. If Assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of Joy and love could not be well exercised: if a Christian were evermore in the dark, concerning his interest in Christ, he could not give obedience to that exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoyce.*

6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to Assurance, as is clear, 1 *Joh.* 3. 18. 19. 2 *Pet.* 4. 5. compared with *verse* 10. where the Apostle *Peter* pressing the Doctrine of making our calling and election sure, he setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to it; and doubtless the marks and evidences that are registrat in the Scripture of a gracious state, doth assure us, that Assurance is attainable.

7. What are the ends of the Sacraments? But that our Assurance may be confirmed, and that our Faith may be strengthened. The two Sacraments are the two great Seals of Heaven, that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the Application, and the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations. 1. I would have it taken notice of, That though Grace and Assurance be two Lovers, yet there is no such Bond of Union between them, that the one cannot consist with the other. A Christian may have the real Grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and no light. A Christian may be going to Heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from thy sight.* Yea, are there not even some who have had Assurance, and some time a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me,* who are now under darkness concerning their Interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had Assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it: when ye miss Assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your Graces; but

when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*: That is, when ye cannot reach the Faith of Assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence: remember *Jobs* divinity, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee*: And consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace, whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since Assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it: And that we may help you in this, we conceive that the obstructions of a Christians Assurance, are especially in these two.

1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And 2. Our untender and unsuitable dealing towards him. Of the first sort we shall lay before you these five.

The first is want of favourable Returns of Prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debate his Interest, and call in question Evidences. *Lam.* 3. 8. compared with *verse* 18. *I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers*: and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, *verse* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*: and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their Interest. And I confess, it is a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer; but yet that needeth not to make a Believer question all, and debate the reality of his Interest in God, since the dearest of all children of the kingdom have been so dealt with, even as *David* Psal. 21. 2. *Cryed night and day without silence*, and is not heard but cryeth out, *Why art thou so far from helping, and from the words of my roaring*; yea, that passage may relate to him who was *the root and off spring of David*, for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, *that the cup might pass from him.*

Secondly. The want of sensible enlargement and liberty

ty in prayer, that he never goeth to his knees, but his heart beginneth to die like a ſtone within him, then he cryeth forth that word, 2 Cor. 3. 17. *Where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*: and ſure if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exerciſe of prayer: And that this is a Riſe of the diſputing of our Intereſt, is clear from *Pſal.* 77. 4. compared with *verſe* 7, 9 ſaith *David*, *I am ſore troubled that I cannot ſpeak*, I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue ſticketh to the roof of my mouth; he from hence draweth that concluſion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in wrath ſhut up his tender mercies for ever?*

I confeſs this alſo is a ſad diſpenſation, to meet with an abſent and vailed Chriſt in prayer; ſo that we can never go to ſeek God in ſecret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, eſpecially when we have loſt that liberty that formerly we have had; and therefore is *Davids* perplexity much heightned *verſe* 5, 6. from his *remembring his ſong in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times*: yet we may remember how ſoon *David* wrote his retractions as to that concluſion, *I ſaid this is my infirmity*, verſ. 10 and ſo ſhould we do when upon every ſtraitning in prayer, we begin to queſtion all the Lords kindneſs towards us.

A third obſtruction of Aſſurance, is a Chriſtians wreſtling with his corruptions painfully and ſeriouſly, and yet not meeting with any ſenſible victory over them; but upon the contrare, their corruptions ſeem to be ſtronger, and they themſelves ſeem to be weaker, and then it is they ſtrengthen their misbelief, but that word 1 Joh. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure*: And indeed, this is a knot that is not eaſily looſed, but when he ſeeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Iſrael concerning this thing*, and yet this alſo is a word in haſt, *Paul* hath regiſtrat himſelf a ſtanding witneſs, even after he was a choſen veſſel, *Rom.* 7.

7. How strangely a child of God may be born down with *a body of death*, even under most serious wrestlings against it; And therefore if thou seriously maintain that combat, though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground, to weaken thy Assurance.

Fourthly. When a Christian is put to more than ordinarly outward affliction, when God doth dispense sadly unto them in outward things, they then begin to call in question their Interest, and dispute their Assurance. This is clear, by comparing *Lament.* 3. verse 18. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they meet with, he draweth that in vers. 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* And *Job* 2. 4. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight.* The devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity, and presents it to a Christian; *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go?* As if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted so as thou art afflicted? And so he would have *Job* to quite his Integrity. But yet we know all these blessed ones, for all their Afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their Interest secure in him: yea, *as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten*, and it is the bastards and not sons, on whom he will not bestow a rod; and therefore, we ought not to quarrel our Interest because of Affiictions

And lastly. The rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their Assurance, is, when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built, become tasteless unto them *as the white of an egg*, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them, their case becomes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *Davids* case, Psal. 77. *When he remembred his song in the night, and the days of old*, and yet had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter

complaints which are there expressed: but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such account; because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best, and the Lord is not always present, but though sometimes the *candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head*, yet at other times he is necessitat to cry out, *O that it were with me as in months past.*

The second sort of Obstructions of a Christians Assurance, I mean such as flow from our untender dealing towards God, are,

First, a guilty conscience: that is a remarkable word 1 Tim. 3. 9. *Holding the mysterie of faith in a pure conscience.* It telleth us, that this excellent grace of Faith cannot bide, but in a cleanly lodging, even in a *pure conscience*; & when a Christian setteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conscience will fly in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe?* The guiltiness of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain lest thou be thrust thorow.* And I tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience;

1. It obstructeth a Christians boldness in making applications to Christ; his heart saith *close*, and his necessity saith *close*; but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O! Stand a back, and do not close.*

2. A guilty conscience, oftentimes it hindereth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrifie, yea, it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself, we cannot take notice; when he would lay on a plaister, our souls will tear it off, *and refuse to be comforted.* 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty: O! but our souls moves slowly in the paths of God, when we are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, That we are not much in the exercise of tenderness. O! but if a Christian were tender, and if in every step of his life he desired *to set Christ before his eyes*, he would easily win to much Assurance, according

according to that word, Isai. 64. 5. *Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh righteousness, and these that remember thee in thy ways.* Would ye know the assured Christian? It is the tender Christian: that Christian that doth not crucifie convictions, the Christian that breaketh not resolutions, the Christian that doth not sit calls and opportunities to prayer, the Christian that saith not of any sin, *it is a little one*, or the Christian that searcheth always, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always casting out sin, and that is the assured Christian.

The third objection is, The want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this dispostion, to fear the Lord and his goodness; This is clear from that word, Psal. 25. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew to them his covenant.*

I think there are these two great evidences, that much of the power of godliness is gone from some of our hearts, we fear God no more, nor if he were our companion; and we fear our selves no more, nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us; we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us.

The fifth thing that doth much obstruct our Assurance, is, much worldly mindedness, and eager pursuit after the things of a present life; that is remarkable, 2 *Cor.* 4 *verse last*, compared with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

We look not unto the things that are seen, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present world, which the men of the world seek and delight themselves in; and it is subjoyned, *For we know that if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*; so we see, Assurance and Mortification to the world are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts? The most part of us are conversing with idols of the world. Would ye know where to find our hearts? They are among the vanities of the world. O! how true is that word, Psal. 39 *Man walks*

in a vain shew. What is man in all his actings? But as one walking in a long Gallery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things, and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings* and *Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; and so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shadow*, pursuing after *dead shadows*; a man that is but a short living shadow, pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure *the one thing necessar.*

5. Want of distinct apprehensions of these three, the infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, and the infinite wisdom of Christ. There is not an Objection O! Christians, that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love. There is not an objection that ye have from the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ. There is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom and goodness of Christ. And there can be nothing against your Assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these, rightly applyed, taken up, and rested on by the soul.

The last thing which hindereth our Assurance, is, the smallness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is small, it is hard to be discerned; and therefore, if ye would have Assurance, learn not to ly still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase your stock, and then ye shall know you are rich: *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God*, and by this, *ye shall know if ye follow on to know the Lord.*

The third consideration is, That Assurance is not bestowed at all times; but there are some special times and seasons, when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his Interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best rob is put upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his

his feet, *Acts* 9. 17. *Paul* meeteth with assurance, immediately after his conversion, 1 *John* 12. 14. *I write unto you little Children, because ye have known the Father,* and before that in the 12. verse. *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you,* so that when a Christian is brought unto Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of Heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity: But do not mistake me, I do not say, this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law, they most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins, and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance, I know there are some Christians if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *one thing I know, I was once blind, but now I see*; but for the time and for the day I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in Prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan.* 9. 23. compared with the preceeding *verse*, he being much and serious in Prayer, doth meet with that word from Heaven, *O man, greatly beloved*, or as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts* 10. 2, 3, 4. when *Cornelius* is much in the exercise of watching and prayer, he seeth a vision and getteth intimation of peace with God; and *Jacob* when he was wrestling with God; *Gen.* 32. he hath that testimony given him, *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God and prevailed.*

The third time is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity: I desire not to be mistaken in this neither; I know some Christians are led to Heaven thorow a dark trance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, untill the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his Fathers house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *where am I going?* But this is

certain, that sometimes, yea, oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death. 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. when was it that *David* sang that song, which hath strengthned thousands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him. And 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. When was it that *Paul* sang that song, *I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*: was it not even then when he was ready to depart, *and to be offered up?* And when was it when old *Simeon* did sing that blessed song, *Luk.* 2. 29. *Now letteſt thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*: was it not within a step of death? As it were, he went to Heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to *Simeon* was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet Intimations of his Interest, Gen. 12. 2. *I will make of thee a great nation*: and verse 7. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham.* And before *Jeremiah* be sent a Preacher unto a rebellious people, he will have that word spoken unto him, *I knew thee, before thou wast brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular Act of Obedience; when *Abraham* had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his Interest and Covenant renewed to him with an oath, Gen. 22. 16. *By my self I have sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not witholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard tryals, difficulties and afflictions in the world, then they usually meet with Assurance; and so *Gen.* 28. 14, 15. 16.

before

before *Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is under sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from Heaven to comfort him, and assure him of his fatherly love and mercy. When was it that Christ left that noble Legacy to his Disciples, Joh. 14. verse 27. *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you*; was it not when he himself was to leave them to troublesome and sorrowful days in a persecuting world.

The eighth time is at some solemn Ordinances and approaches to God; the days of a Communion to a tender Christian, have been sweet days, when Christ hath come to the soul, and said, *Behold me, behold me.* I think the eleven Apostles met with much Assurance of their Interest in Christ at the Communion they were at with him; O what sweet intimations were these, *This is my body which is broken for you, and this cup is the New Testament in my blood shed for you?* And a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.*

We come now to the second point which we proposed from the words, *viz.* That as Assurance is a thing which may be attained, so to seek after it, it is a necessary duty; let me not be mistaken, as if I had said, the having of Assurance were simply necessary to Salvation; no, that were a Doctrine as comfortless upon the other hand, as the Popish doctrine of the impossibility of Assurance is upon the other; But the thing I say, is, that the Christian seeking after Assurance, and his real endeavouring to attain unto it, is a necessary command of God, which he hath bound upon the consciences of his children, among other Gospel duties; And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this, than the Text it self; what meaneth these peremptory injunctions, *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your own selves. Know ye not*, &c. But if ye will, ye may add the word 2 Pet. 1. verse 5, and 10. compared, what ca-

more expresly commanded, and more stronlgy pressed, than that Christians should bend their outmost endeavours for attaining unto this blessed condition of assurance; *Give all diligence*, yea, *give all diligence*, yea, *the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

From this, we shal only lay before you these considerations. 1. If the seeking after assurance be a necessary duty, then these three things are most lamentable. *First*, That there are so many in this generation, *who are so pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquity*; they flatter themselves with a rotten assurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination, they never knew since the first day they were baptized, and did begin to profes Christ, what it was to mortifie one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation, and yet they want not a strong perswasion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will ye stand in aw, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, t (when ye think ye are in the very gate of Heaven) ven then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hell; nd when ye expect a kindly welcome from the Lord of Glory, as one who thinks you have been in Covenant with him this many years, ye meet with that dreadful Summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account, that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it; yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it: Is it not very lamenable, that many of you to whom I am speaking, since first you gave up your names to Christ in a visible way, and were reputed amongst the generation of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day, or an hour a part to examine whether ever indeed you were in Christ or not. Alas, is Heaven of so little moment? is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there of so small concernment to you, that ye will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter? What if any

of

of you were but possessors of a thousand pound, and your interest or right unto it uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet till you had made it more secure? What think you shal the men of this generation answer in the day of the Lord for neglecting *that one thing necessary*; when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations to make sure a worm eaten portion in a perishing world, that the whole wit of Men and Angels cannot secure for one moment? It is certain, the root of all slothfulness is Atheism. It is not possible that we believe as really there is a Heaven, as we believe there is an Earth, or that the world to come is real as that which is present; or else it must be a strange power in the lusts that keeps us captive, that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that Command is, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure.* When the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence? and when he saith, *make your calling and election sure*, will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly.*

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live contentedly under the want thereof. How strange is it, that many are to seldome on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians, I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of Heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there. I will not limit the Lord, nor determine what

he may do, but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many Christians of this age have a pleasant night, and comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of Assurance: I may fear that lamentation shall be heard upon the death beds of many, *O! poor wretched wandering soul, where art thou going?* And it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of Assurance, are *the careless daughters that dwelleth at ease*: Christ and they are at a remarkable distance, it must be a cold winter, and dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after Assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves, what means are fit for you to use, that ye may attain it; and if ye enquire what these means are, I shall only lay before you some few.

1. That ye would be much in the exercise of Faith, I mean the direct Acts of Faith, whereby the sinner from the sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fulness: for indeed there are two great faults amongst the Lords people; 1. Some do seek Assurance of Faith, before ever they seek to have Faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, than they are in strengthning their evidences; so that most of their time is spent in questioning. O! Is this a real evidence of Assurance; whereas more actual believing in Christ, and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and surer way. That word is most clear, Eph. 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise*; that is, ye got Assurance, but not before ye believed. And ye know it is said, Mat. 9. 2. *And when Jesus saw their faith, he said, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*: so then it is

clear

clear, that to be much in believing, is the neareſt way to Aſſurance.

2 Ye would be much in believing the general Truths and Promiſes of the Gospel, and frequently meditating of them; all Aſſurance is by a practical Syllogiſm, the firſt whereof muſt needs be a Scripture Truth; And certainly, the firm Aſſent to that Truth, and the ſouls delightful meditation on it, is often bleſſed of the Lord, as a ſpecial mean whereby the conſcience is helped to make the Aſſumption, and alſo to bring forth the concluſion: For inſtance, we ſee with what ſtrength of affection *Paul* acteth his Faith on that word, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came to ſave ſinners*, and preſently ſee what followeth on it, *Of whom I am the chief*, then is his Aſſurance; for doubtleſs he meant, that he was the chief *of ſaved ſinners*. Yea, certainly a ſinner thus exerciſing himſelf, will often find ſo much ſweetneſs in the general Truths, that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exerciſe of all ſpiritual graces and Chriſtian duties, that this is amongſt the beſt means of attaining to Aſſurance, is manifeſt from 2 Pet. 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure*; for indeed it is very obſervable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in diſputing and queſtioning about our election; but a diligence in the practice of duties and graces, as is clear from verſe 6. *Give all diligence* (ſaith the Apoſtle) Whereto? In adding *to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance*, &c. And then verſe 8. *If ye do all theſe things, ye ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: he doth not ſay *in the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt* ſimply, but *of our Lord Jeſus*; importing, that the reſult of diligence in theſe graces, ſhall be the knowledge of Chriſt as ours, and of our intereſt in him; and then he addeth, (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh theſe things, is blind, and cannot ſee afar off*; this is, he cannot ſee far

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in any ſpiritual matter, and ſo not in the matter of his intereſt, O therefore, think not that ye will get aſſurance by lying down with the ſluggard upon your bed, or by your formal prayer, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to aſſurance, ye muſt be ſtriving as in an agony; for ſo the word importeth, which is uſed to expreſs our diligence in Chriſtian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, ſo if ever ye would come to aſſurance, ye would be tender and circumſpect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Pſal.* 50. laſt verſe, *To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*; and *Iſa.* 32. *The effect of righteouſneſs is peace and aſſurance for ever.* Ah, the untender walk that many of us have: it is no wonder to ſee us walk in darkneſs, ſuch ſtinking groſs vapours that ariſeth off our converſation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from ſeeing God, and certainly ſuch pearls as *Aſſurance*, is not given to dogs and ſwine, leſt they tread upon them.

SERMON. VIII.

2. Cor 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own ſelves, know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

THere are two great ballances in which men do weigh themſelves, there are ſome that weigh themſelves in the ballance of deceit, who think that in all their labours there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weighter of the ſpirit, when he ſhall weigh them, will engrave them upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and are found light*: O but there are many who approve themſelves, whom Chriſt ſhall never approve; There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, and many that call Chriſt *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouſe*. 2. There are

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ſome who weigh themſelves in the ballance of the Sanctuary, who upon ſolid and moſt ſpiritual grounds do draw this concluſion, *I am my beloveds, and his deſire is towards me*, who can with boldneſs and confidence look Chriſt in the face, and ſay, *thou art mine*, and with much ſpiritual confidence, take him in their arms, and cry out, he ſhall be eternally mine; and ſure there is not a more pleaſant life than to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him? Am I not made up in him?*

Before I come to the words, there are three great and moſt ſoul concerning errours amongſt the Chriſtians of theſe days, that we deſire ye may conſider. 1. There are many that are more deſirous to know what they are, than what they would do: there are ſome that are more taken up to know whether they be juſtified and ſanctified; than to be indeed juſtified and ſanctified; and they are more deſirous to know if they be in Chriſt, than indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do ſpend a great deal more time diſputing that queſtion, *whether am I in Chriſt or not?* than they do in uſing of theſe means by which real union and communion with him may be attained: But oh, will ye once ſtudy more to be in him, and that ſhal be the ſhorteſt way to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The ſecond great errour is that ſome are more deſirous to know what they ſhould do, than they are deſirous to do what they know. Are there not many of us that have this queſtion, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord?* and yet we do not know his Commandment is with us, that we *ſhould do juſtly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.* A third errour is, that we are more in talking of Chriſt, than in believing in him, or cloſing with him; Some of us think to win to heaven by diſcourſes, if we can talk of Chriſt, we think all is without debate or controverſie; but alas, there are many who were ſweet talkers of Chriſt, that are curſing him this day in hell. And I would only ſay this by the way, if there be any

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of you, that have win to any soul-perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you if ye can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a month, and such a year of God, you did then win to cry out, *I am my beloveds, and he is mine*; it seemeth to have been *Davids* practice, *Psal.* 16. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lords*, and it was *Jeremiahs* practice, *Lam.* 3 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* I say, ye should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when temptations come, and begin to assault you, you may look on your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing; but I hope ere long we shal be above the reach of misbelief, & above the reach of fears; I hope ere long we shal dispute no more, we shal be jealous no more, and we shal question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shal be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. *O expectants of Heaven, expectants of Heaven*, are ye not looking after this day? are ye looking after it? I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon his way, O to see him, we would even stand and wonder at him: I hope the day is coming when we shal never lose our grips of Christ any more, he is coming, he is coming; and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence; O what streets are these that are there? Is there any here who is groaning for Heaven, be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shal come, he shal come and wash all tears from our eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The *first* was, that such a thing as a distinct and well grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable: and of this we have already spoken. The *second thing* is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing Assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God; and

and to make this evident, it is clear first in this Text, from that serious and accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared unto you from the force of the words, and his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* and therefore doth the Apostle add, *Let every one prove his own work,* and verse 7. *Be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance. *Hos.* 8. *Israel cryeth out, my God, we know thee,* and yet Israel was in a great mistake: for in the words following, *verse* 3. *Israel had cast off the thing that was good,* and Pro. 30. *ver.* 12. we find there a *generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed away from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great design of Satan, the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken about that noble and weighty point of our assurance, of being in Christ, Is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the nations? I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us, than in this, if profanity kills its *thousands,* delusion kills ten *thousands,* and this delusion its *twenty thousands:* Lastly, doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, *Jer.* 17. 9. *It is deceitful above all things, and desperatly wicked, who can know it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrace a shadow in stead of substance.

The next thing that we have to speak to you upon this point, is to shew you where these mistakes do ly, and what

what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; & here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude, that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed, it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves, and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations, which we beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light and joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at lest not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shal not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that these are such as proceed from a saving work of the Spirit of grace, but waving that debate, give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments and sensible manifestations (as to the point in hand) there may be sometime a good supporter to underprop a Christians assurance when it tottereth, but never a good foundation whereon he may lay the first stone of that building: and therefore he is the wiser christian who first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righteousness and holiness, before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be. 2. Some build their assurance upon the number and bulk of their duties, without considering the frame of their spirit, and the principle from which they flow; they use prayer, and reading, and conference, they wait upon ordinances, and are always there where the means is thought to be most powerful: and upon this they take up themselves in their own arms, blessing themselves, as that poor

poor man, *Luke* 18. *I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: but alas, they do not consider that they *do but build their houses upon the sand*, which the first blast of a temptation will overturn, because not only all our duties, when weighed in in the ballance, may be found light, but when put to the tryal may be found empty, dead and lifeless things, wherein the Lords soul can have no pleasure.

3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their assurance, by judging themselves by the Law, not knowing, or not regarding the spiritual meaning thereof: *Paul* was a gallant man (in his own apprehension) when he was without the Law, that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the Law, he thought himself the most eminennt Saint in all his Nation; and as he sheweth us, *Phil.* 3. he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord openeth his eyes, we see he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rom.* 7. *He was alive without the Law*, that is, he thought himself living and reigning above his sins; but *When the Commandment came*, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and when he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived & he died*, he then saw that how that he had triumphed before the victory, he saw all his sins alive, and as it were risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Paul's* first condition? *alive without the Law.* O how many destroy themselves with this, they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the Law of God but only *Ten*, but alas, thou fool, thou *errest in this, not knowing the Scriptures*: should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extant of the meaning of the Law, and that divine Commentary which the Apostle *James*, hath set forth upon it, wherein he sheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*, and by that infalible Exposition which Christ himself the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat.* 6. whereby he discovereth adultery in the heart and in the

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eye. O atheiſt, thou muſt take up the ten Commandments, and ſubſcribe *guilty* to them all: And let me tell you this, if ye will ſubſcribe the Law to Chriſt, he will ſubſcribe the Goſpel to you; if thou wilt ſincerely ſay *I am guilty*, he will as ſincerly ſay, I have pardoned; *Son or daughter be of good courage, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*

Fourthlie, Some build their aſſurance upon the apprehenſions of the hatred of ſome particular ſin, that albeit it was ſometimes as their right hand, or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or cut it off: But O, will thou but conſider, ſome ſins may be made weak and the ſoul (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry unto it, *get you hence*; and yet the intereſt of Satan may be ſtrong in the heart. The *fifth* miſtake is of many who judge themſelves, becauſe go a greater length than the former, and are kept free from *all* groſs outbreaking ſin; how many are there who go ſleeping down to Hell with this; I am no drunkard, nor adulterer, nor murderer, nor thief, nor whore: this long have I lived in the Town, and they were never born that can ſay, I have wronged them; and ſo they venture their ſouls upon this, they never committed any groſs ſin. I beſeech you be not deceived. remember how that wrethed man did ſpeed, *Luke* 18. 11. *I am no extortioner, nor adulterer, nor even as this publican, &c.* poor creature that he was! Chriſt giveth not a Teſtimonial to every one who take it for themſelves: and I muſt tell ſome of you, that there may be deſperate atheiſts without God, and without Chriſt in the world, and yet be free from groſs outbreaking ſins; I do not think but many of theſe who crucified the Lord of Glory, were keeped from other groſs ſins; what knoweſt thou, O man that there is more favour ſhewed to thee, In that thou art keeped from ſome groſs ſins. when yet thou haſt a deſperatly wicked heart, then is ſhewed to the devil, when ſome links of his chain are taken in, and reſtraining power keeping him from his utmoſt bounds, God will ſometimes reſtrain

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a hypocrite, or a heathen, as it was ſaid of *Abimelech, and God reſtrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, when thou art far from having the Power of conquering grace: it may be alſo, that all that abſtaining from outward out-breakings, proceedeth but from outward diſadvantages, and not from any fear of God, or reſpect to him, yea, not ſo much as from the fear of any eternal puniſhment: are there not many amongſt us, believe it, there are many that take away ſhame, and Church cenſure, or civil puniſhment, and other inconveniencies of that ſort, and ſet a thouſand hells before them, they would not be keeped back from one ſin, but would take their hazard of them all: Yea, is it not want of Tentation and nothing elſe, that hindreth many from groſs out breakings; if Satan would come but with a kindled match, there wanteth no more to let tongue and hands, and all on fire of hell. O wretched ſoul, do but ask thy ſelf how often thou haſt tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee, and how often thou haſt followed a temptation, when it fled from thee; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways, that thou could not overtake thy lovers, how many a long look haſt thou ſent after them, and what luſtings of thy ſpirit within, and do ye think that heart ſins are nothing, although thou had no out-breakings, what were the matter of that: if thou had not a tongue, thou would break the third Command, and *curſe God in thy heart*; if thou had not an eye, thou could commit *adultery in thy heart*: if thou had not a hand, thou might commit murder *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy aſſurance upon this, that thou haſt made clean the out ſide of the platter, when yet all filthineſs is within. The *ſixth* falſe foundation upon which I am ſure too many build their aſſurance, is their gifts and parts, eſpecially upon theſe two, the gift of Prayer, and the gift of Knowledge; but believe it, it is not much to be a Chriſtian in tongue but it is much be a Chriſtian in heart; know you not that this wil caſt out many,

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We have propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out devils. No doubt, theſe had been excellent flouriſhers, and if the Tongue would have done it, they had been highly advanced; but yet ye ſee theſe men meet with a depart from me, I know you not. Ah, think upon it, he is not the beſt Chriſtian that is the beſt Orator. Religion that is pure and undefiled, conſiſteth more in the affection, than in the Tongue, and more in practice than in profeſſion. I beſeech you when you caſt up your evidences of aſſurance, conſider how well you have done, and not how well ye have ſpoken.

The *ſeventh* falſe ground whereby many do misjudge themſelves, is, their ſuppoſed peace of Conſcience: O ſaith one, my Conſcience doth not charge me with any thing, I thank God I have a quiet mind and nothihg troubles me; but ah, poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the ſtrong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? a dumb Conſcience, and a ſeared Conſcience, is a dreadful plague. Knoweſt thou not that many ſay, I ſhall have peace. though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart: and becauſe they ſay ſo, the Lord ſhal not ſpare them, but all the curſes in his Book ſhall ly upon them.

The *eighth* falſe ground is, the approbation of other Chriſtians, ſo that if they have the approbation of ſome ſuch exerciſed Chriſtians, or if they have the approbation of ſuch a Miniſter, that is the way to ſilence all their diſputings. O curſed be the perſon that putteth his truſt in men who are liars: O man or woman, let me aſſure you this, if ye had a Teſtimonial to preſent, to Chriſt, ſubſcribed with all the hands of every Chriſtian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Chriſt to reject you and it both. *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphaſis in that word, *I know you not*: as if he had ſaid, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The *ninth* falſe ground is their dililigent obſerving the Ordinances, their going to preachings, and their going to Com-

Communions, *and running to and fro*, pretending this end, *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at a Table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shall say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shall say, *depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false Foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shall only say, it may be thou never had a joyful day neither, in all thy sinful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to Heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, (and though I will not say it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to Hell. O! wilt thou but consider, what if he be heaping *coals upon thy head, and fatting thee to the day of slaughter?* What if this word be your portion, eat, drink, and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must certainly die? What are all your pleasures, and what are all your honours, and what are all your possessions? What are they all? Are they not a bone cast unto a dog? The Lord valueth them not: what if they be the fatting of you to the day of slaughter?

Now as to these who deny they have had an interest in Christ, when indeed they have, they commonly deceive themselves, and vex their own spirits upon some of these mistakes 1. Some judge of their estate by their present state and condition, so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundation; and to such I would only say, that every change of condition doth not speak change of estate; a child of God may be in much darkness, and under much deadness, and yet a child of God still, *Psalm.* 73. It was an evil

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frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips and holdeth him by the right hand: *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth fast his integrity; and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine?

2. Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate, and if Christ do not smile always, we know not what it is to keep up the faith of our interest: and indeed this is a great fault among Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his dispensation, doth that speak forth a change of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voice to us, but we think he changeth his heart: Christ cannot speak to us in the whirl-wind, but we cry out, why art thou become unto us as an enemy? O shal precious Christ be thus mistaken.

The *third* ground of mistake about our interest in Christ is, that we judge of our Estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge and search himself, he can find nothing in himself, but what is the matter of doubting, and therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a Believer: But O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all; O if Christians knew to judge of themselves, by what they are in Christ, and not by what they are in themselves, that with one eye they might look to themselves, and cry out, *I am undone*, and with another look to Christ, and cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*; That is, with one eye they might look to themselves and *blush*, and with another eye they might look to Christ, and *hope*; that with one eye they might look to themselves and *weep*, and with another eye that they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*. O Christian, will thou judge alway of thy self by what thou

thou art in Christ, and not by what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with tentations that put thee to dispute thy interest, do but send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O precious Christ answer this tentation, for this is Christs way with the soul, the Law must bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the law, and deliver us over to it, not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet and constant travelling between Christ and the law; when thou hast broken the law, flee unto Christ to take away guilt, and when thou hast closed with Christ, come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The *fourth* mistake, that a Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them, some Christians if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundation, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie; but I must say this to thee, we would not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touchstone, for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of faith is a like precious, with what the Apostles themselves had.

The *fifth* ground of mistake among Christians, is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints than they judge of themselves by the Word. O saith one, if I were like *David*, I would believe, but I am not like *David*, nor *Job*, nor *Hezekiah:* and therefore there is none of the Saints to which I should go, and if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe? I would only say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *Davids* objection, *Psal* 22. 5 6 *Our fathers trusted in thee*, O they were excellent men, but what a man am I? *A worm and not a man*; and yet he was put from that objecti-

jection: and I would ſay this, are ye below him, in what? I hope ye are not below *David* in neceſſity; now though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in neceſſity, ye have ſo much the more right to believe; for as we have ſaid before, neceſſity giveth you a right, and the more neceſſity, the greater right to believe.

The ſixth ground is, that Chriſtians judge of their eſtate by Chriſts part of the Covenant, and not by their own, rather examining themſelves by what Chriſt hath promiſed to do for them, than by what is left them to do; which thing if it be heeded, would put a cloſe to many of our miſtakes and diſputings.

Having now laid out ſome miſtakes upon either hand, the next we would do, is to propoſe ſome conſiderations to preſs you to guard againſt theſe miſtakes, eſpecially the firſt.

And the firſt conſideration is, that miſtakes about ones intereſt in Chriſt, and Aſſurance, is a moſt univerſal and popular evil: it is not one of a city, nor two of a family, but many are miſtaken in their intereſt in Chriſt; that word Prov. 30. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not cleanſed from their iniquity*; it is not one or two that are under this miſtake, but it is a generation; and I ſuppoſe there are many of us that are of this Tribe and generation, *Mat.* 7. 22. He ſaith, *many in that day ſhall ſay unto me, Lord, Lord, and have we not propheſied, and yet he ſhall ſay unto them, I know you not*: ſince it is ſo univerſal a miſtake, I intreat you be much in the ſearch of your ſelves, ſearch your own ſelves; certainly I think, if there were but within this Church one that were under this miſtake, it ſhould put us all to this, *Maſter is it I, Maſter is it I?* But how much more ſince there is a generation of miſtakers, ſhould it not be our exerciſe every day to cry out, *is it I?*

The ſecond conſideration is, that as it is a moſt univerſal, ſo alſo it is a moſt irrecoverable miſtake; if ye miſtake about this, your being in Chriſt, there is no making

making up of that mistake, if once ye pass the borders of Time with this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ, there is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off access to make up mistakes: I intreat you go not down to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say, I know you not: I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by all the hands of the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint, and if all the Ministers that ever you spoke to, should praise you in the gate, and declare you to be a son and daughter of *Abraham*; yet when you shal bring up your testimonial to Heaven, and the Father shal read it; and shal ask you where is my Son's Name, if that be not there, it will certainly be rejected, and cast over the Bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of the immortal soul according to that word, *Isai* 44. 20. *A deceived heart hath led him aside*, and what is the fruit of it, *so that he cannot deliver his soul*, and by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul: I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chariot of delusion; we know some Christ guideth to Heaven, by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life, till they be in the sight of hell; but it is true also, there are others whom the Devil guideth to hell, by the very borders of Heaven, he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gate of Heaven all their days, and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly, If once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three notable disadvantages attending upon them. 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the Ordinances, for when he heareth preaching; he will apply promises, when he should apply threatnings; and upon the other hand applying threatnings, when he should apply promises; and so that which should be his

medicine becometh poiſon to him. 2. As long as he is under this miſtake, it maketh him that he cannot pity nor have compaſſion upon himſelf, that though he be the moſt ſultable object of compaſſion, yet he knows not what it is to weep over his own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but deluſions, all his good motions are but flaſhes, and all his mortifications counterfeit, and all his tenderneſs is but the mother of ſtupidity, and therefore guard againſt miſtakes about your intereſt in Chriſt, I intreat you.

Fifthly, Conſider that miſtakes about ones intereſt, is a moſt abiding and conſtant miſtake, believe it, if once we miſtake in this, it is one to a hunder if ever we come right again, this is clear, *Jer.* 8. 5. *They hold faſt deceit, they keep it with their hands*: and *Iſai* 44. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand*, that is, they hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power; I ſay, if once one be miſtaken concerning their intereſt in Chriſt, it is hard to put them from it; yea, deluſion it is ſuch an abiding thing, that we find Chriſt ſpeaketh of it, as if it would wait upon one before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt; and as if ſome would never quite their hope of Heaven, till Chriſt pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not*, deluſion may carry us over the borders of Time, and lead us in to Eternity.

Sixthly, There is much counterfeit Religion that is in thoſe days, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderneſs; and ſome they love ſhadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very ſhadow of Chriſt, and there are not many who think they are imbracing Chriſt, and yet are imbracing a deluſion and a fancy.

That which *thirdly* we would ſpeak to from this point to give you ſome evidences by which ye may know if the aſſurance ye have of your beeing in Chriſt, be right, or not: Believe it, there are many that draw that concluſion, *I am in Chriſt*, which the devil and their own deceitful

ceitful heart have drawn, and Christ never gave consent to it: And I shal propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurances, by which ye may discern.

First, A real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance, this is clear, 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him* that is, perswaded of him that he shal come to Heaven, *He will purifie himself as he is pure*; And 2 *Cor.* 7 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit.*

O! When a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, *What have I any more to do with idols?* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every tentation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price*, I cannot now dispose of my self; and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils *pillow sewed over your arm holes.* Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness, can such a delusion as this overtake you.

Secondly, A real assurance putteth the Christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion and fellowship with God, is it possible for one to be assured, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love*, this is clear, *Song* 2. 16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and immediately followeth: *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a young roe, or a yound Hart upon the mountains of Bether* And it is clear, *Song* 7. 10, 11. *I am my beloveds and his desired is towards me*, and what followeth upon that; he cometh and inviteth Christ, *O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.*

O when gave ye Christ such an invitation as this, O precious Christ, let us *lodge in the villages, and go down to the secret places of the field*; and *Psal.* 63. 1. *My God*, there is his assurance: and immediately followeth upon that, *Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee*

as in a dry parched land where no water is, There is a pressing desire after communion: But I would aske you, Are there not many here who have the hope of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ, was never with them: I desire to say to thee, (be who thou will) *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which thou sowest thou shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, we would let Christ live in heaven many days without giving him one visit, if he would let us alone: But O, if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often would this be our complaint, when he were absent; *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him,* or my idol hath carried me away from him, and I know not where to find him.

Thirdly, Assurance of our beeing in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise; believe it, I think this is one of the most searching evidences of assurance; there are some Christians they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of Prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of Praise, they never have one conviction; and I tell you the reason of it, prayer is a selfish grace (so to speak) but praise is a denying grace; prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, *Exod.* 15. 2. *He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation, and he is my fathers God, I will exalt him.* Psal. 118. 28. *He is my God, I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him,* what needeth *David* these repetitions, might not one serve? No saith he, I would even spend my days in this, *My God, my God*; and there is much of heaven in that word, *God,* and love commiteth many sweet *tautologies*: Now I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart exercise of praise, by this assurance thou hast, this is an evidence indeed, but alas, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him, as is clear, *Song* 2. 3.

I sat down under his shadow, there is faith and assurance of it; and what accomplisheth that? *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.* Christ hath not a match saith the Spouse, in his sweetness, his power, his beauty, and his usefulness, is above all.

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the Assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust: Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes, when he cryed out, *I am less than the least of all thy mercies?* What, was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* And was not *Paul* a low man in his own eyes, Eph. 3. 8. *I am less than the least of all thy Saints*; and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of all sinners?* The Assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry out, *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips.*

Sixthly, real Assurance will put him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duties. That word Psal. 40. 8. *My God* saith he, that is his Assurance; and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will, O Lord*; this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, Psal 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, I will keep the commandments of my God.* I believe the love of Christ, when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty; and therefore this proud transporting Assurance in these days, that setteth men above all duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count the Gospel, as well as the Law, *but beggerly rudiments*, and cry out to their neighbours, *Stand a back, for I am holier than thou*, must needs be a delusion

Lastly, There are these three properties of a real Assurance, it is a begotten Assurance, it is a living Assurance, and it is a constraining Assurance.

The first two properties of it are set down in that 1 Pet. 1. 3. *He hath begotten us unto a lively hope*; who begat that Assurance in thee? I suppose some have Assurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Christ

be not the Father of thy Assurance, it will evanish and pass away. And secondly, it must be a living Assurance, some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say, they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it must be a constraining Assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant *Isaac* that we have, if he commandeth us to sacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up.

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate; what think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ or no? I suppose if Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, we would have a thin assembly; I confess, I wonder, that that word doth not make us to walk with sadness, *Many are called, but few are chosen.* Now I ask this question at all, as in the sight of God, and as you will one day answer unto him that will be your Judge; what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ?* I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, *are ye in Christ?* O! I doubt much if there should be many negative answer within the doors, we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it keeped it self, that is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, Lam. 3. 40. *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*; when thou hast searched, come away; for I tell thee this, there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity; and I hope there is none of you but ye have enough of this: and I know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come, but it shall not be for your advantage to stay away, till ye

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be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *come away*; O persons that are in Christ, *come away*; we must preach that word *come away*, unto you, as long as you are here, till ye come and be *fixed as a pillar in the house of God*, and go no more out. O study to be near him! O Christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O! when shall I have immediat embraces of blessed Christ, when there shall be nothing between my heart and him? Till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is always something between him and us, till we be above the clouds. O! these immediat soul infoldings and embracings of Christ: Are ye never sending a messenger to Heaven, desiring a pass to go away, that ye may enjoy them? And are ye not longing for the day, when the waters of *Jordan* shall divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall pass thorow? Now let us *sing praises to our King, sing praises, for he hath gone up with a shout, and shall come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I Think ere long, there are many that passeth under the notion of Professors, that the veriest Atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou also become like unto one of us?* Are there not many here, that are in a golden dream and in a fools paradise, *that dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they shall be hungry?* Therefore I think it is incumbent upon us, to search and examine our state and condition; profanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion and presumption hath slain their ten thousands. It was an ancient complaint of Christ, Luk. 12. 57. *And why even of your selves judge ye not what is right?* I am perswaded of this, there are ma-

ny decreets of peace past upon earth, that are never ratified in heaven; there are many that cry out, *The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by the sword of his Justice shall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the last occasion that we spake upon these words, there were six things we intended to speak from them; of the first three we have spoken.

That which we intend to speak to at this time, is That there is much soul advantage and spiritual gain, that doth redound to the Christian by the distinct persuasion of his interest in Christ; this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the command of searching and trying themselves, as if he had said, it is a business that will be so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to search and try diligently. And for further clearing of the point, I shall only give these three places, Rev 2. 17. *I will give unto them a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knoweth but he that hath received it*: By the *new name, and the white stone*, is understood Assurance, and the Intimation of it to the soul: This indeed is such a mercy, that I defy any to make language of it, no man knoweth it, much less can he express it, but he that is the possessor of it; and that place Isa. 62. 3 *I will give unto them a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name* O what a name must that be which the mouth of the Lord will name? I think what he giveth must be one of the noblest names that ever was given, all the stiles and titles under heaven, cannot equal it. And thirdly, we see *David* in the 18 *Psalm*, found much sweetness and advantages in this, when nine times he hath that word, *My strength, my rock, my fortress and my deliverer, my strength and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower*: O *David*, what needeth all these *Mys*? *David* would answer, O! he is so sweet in himself, but O! much sweeter to me, when I put to that possessive note, *My*.

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages of Assurance: The first is, That a person that is assured of his interest in Christ, he is much in desiring commu-

nion with Christ. *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,* (there is his Assurance) *where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon?* There is desire of communion. And Song 7. 10, 11. *My beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me,* there is his Assurance; and immediatly followeth, *Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, let us lodge in the villages,* there her desire of communion. Song 2. 16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and what followeth upon that, *He feedeth among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows flee away. Turn my beloved, and be as a roe, or a wild hart upon the mountains of Bether*: that is in short, let me have sweet correspondence and fellowship with thee, till the day of eternity shall come. I think the desires of an assured Christian, they are like the grave, they cry continually, *Give, give,* and they never say, *it is enough.* What is the reason ye seek so little after fellowship with Christ? It is even this, ye are not perswaded of your interest in him; believe it, if once ye had attained to this blessed length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine,* it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a distance with him, as you do for the most part. O! but Assurance maketh absence from Christ an unsupportable burden, Psal. 22. 1. *My God, my God,* there is Assurance; and immediatly followeth this complaint, *why hidest thou thy self from me? Song* 3. 1, 2, 3. that word, *Him whom my soul loveth,* made her to weep so much under absence from Christ; and *Joh.* 20. 13. when the Angels ask the question at *Mary, woman, why weepest thou?* I think she thought it a needless question, and she tells the cause of it, *They have taken away my Lord*; I think her heart was at her mouth, when she pronounced these two words, *My Lord,* she spake them with a great deal of emphasis and force; could ye resent absence with Christ so little, if ye were sure he were yours? I confess, it is no wonder when persons lose that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the loss of it: but oh! to lose that which is our own, it maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly,

Secondly, It maketh the soul to have a high and matchless esteem of precious Christ, *Song* 5. 10, *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief of ten thousand*; O saith the Spouse, I never saw his like. and I shal never see his like again; there is much in that *My*: interest maketh her look upon Christ with another eye nor she would have done, strangers look upon him but as a *tree planted upon the sand*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious*, not every one And *Song* 2. 2. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*, the reason is interest in the words going before, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*; yea Assurance will make every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to the soul, as is clear, Song 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely*, or *he is all desires*. I tell you what Assurance will do, it will make Christs person pleasant and precious to the soul, it will make Christs Natures pleasant to the soul, it will make Christs Offices pleasant to the soul, and it will make Christs promises pleasant to the soul, it will make threatnings pleasant to the soul, it will make the smell of Christs garments pleasant to the soul, and it will make the kisses of his mouth pleasant to the soul: O! saith the assured Christians, there is nothing in Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires; His threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a Friend, and his kisses are pleasant, they are better than wine, his Name is pleasant, it is a precious Ointment poured forth, His smilings are most delightsome, *whose Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars*: O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleasant is it to the soul What maketh you have so low thoughts of Christ: even this, the want of Assurance, that he is your Husband.

Thirdly, Assurance will make the Christian patiently to submit to every Cross and sad dispensation he meeteth with: This is clear, Heb. 10. 24. *They took with joy the spoiling of their goods*, and what made them do so? *They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more enduring substance*: I tell you assurance, it will answer all crosses with this, *Christ is mine*, when they are afflicted, assurance will lift up its face and cry out, *Christ is mine*; and when they are reproached. they will comfort themselves with this, *Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus*.

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from Apostacy, and defection from Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Make your calling and election sure, and if ye do this* (saith he) *ye shall never fall*; Heb. 3. 11, 12. Is there set down as a fault of the evil heart of *misbelief*, it maketh us *depart from the living God*: but on the contrary, assurance knitteth the soul to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not easily broken Believe it, the assured Christian can cry out with much confidence of faith, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*, the assured Christian can cry out with much chearfulness, *In God will I praise his word, in God have I put my trust. I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me*; yea, he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of danger, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*

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the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Psal. 27. 1.

Fifthly, Assurance keepeth all the graces of the Spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches, which maketh every grace sweetly to blossom in his season. 1. It stirre h up the exercise of love: O how vigorous are the actings of love, when a Christian can cry out, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, Song 1. 13. *My beloved*: there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe and shall ly all night between my breasts*, that is, as long as time shal last, I shal never have Christ out of my heart, there is love, 1 *John* 4. 19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*, our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love; the sense of his love to us, putteth our heart into a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assurance keeps up the exercise of Prayer, it is the assured Christian that can pray best, and to best advantage; and in these three things especially is Prayer helped by assurance: 1. It helpeth in the point of *boldness*: O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the throne of grace, crying, *Abba Father, and my Lord and my God.* 2. It helpeth our diligence in Prayer, Psal. 63. 1. *O my God*, here is Assurance, *early will I seek thee*, there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. 3. It helpeth the *fervency* of Prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, there is fervency as another fruit of his Assurance. 4. Assurance keepeth in exercise, and life the grace of mortification, as is clear, by comparing 2 Cor. 4. verse last, with 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen*: O *Paul* what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world? O faith *Paul*, and would you know the ground of it, *We know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; my house and my treasure is in heaven, I must have my heart there and mine eyes also; would you know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the Assurance of your Interest in Christ continually with you. And 5. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility: there is nothing will keep Christians so humble as Assurance, Gal. 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Eph. 3. 8. *there he is all in exalting graces, and debasing himself* It is the misbeliever and discouraged person, that dwelleth nearest pride; believe it, misbelief is big with child of pride & apostacy, these are the two children which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And 6. It will help the grace of repentance: would ye know what would make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms, and call him ours, Zech. 12. 10. *They shal look upon him*, that is their Faith; *and they shal mourn as one mourneth for his only son*, I think it is known by experience, the soul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and can say, *He is mine*: O how sweetly do they then complain? there is not a sight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaks all their heart in pieces, and it is as a sword piercing into the bones, when they cry out, O what a fool was I to offend such a precious

precious One, in whom I had so much interest? was it not sense of interest that made *Mary* wash the feet of Christ with her tears? Lastly, it will keep in exercise the grace of joy, 1 Pet. 1. 8. It is Faith which maketh one to *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; Would ye know why your graces are withered? Would ye know why all the pleasant plants to God within your soul are decayed? It is this, ye live without sight of your interest in Christ; believe it (if so I may speak) Assurance will be a watering to your graces every morning, and refresh them every hour, it being a channel through which divine influences are conveyed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the Christian, by Assurance of his interest in Christ is, That is maketh death exceeding pleasant, and comfortable to the soul: What maketh death *the king of terrours*, and what maketh it so to us? Is it not this, we go to heaven under a cloud? The assured Christian can take death in his arms, and cry out, welcome, *O friend*: The assured Christian when he seeth the Chariots his father sends for him, doth withhold *Jacob* rejoyce; and Psal. 23. *When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*: What brought you that length, *David*? I tell you why, saith he, *for God is with me*, vers. 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company; It is he a[illegible]d Christian that can cry out, *Why should I fear death*? Should I not laugh at destruction? I think indeed, the assured Christian [illegible]eth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows; &c is not the day of death his Coronation day, his marriage day, the day of his triumph, and of his entring into rest, and why then should he fear it? The seventh advantage is, that a Christian being in the state of Assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy as a wonder, it is the assured Christian that cryeth out *I am less than the least of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meeteth with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it, that it came from my husband, and from my father, it will be better to him than the sweetest wine.

Lastly, Assurance doth exceedingly help us to chearfulness in obedience: O that is a remarkable connexion that *Paul* hath, Acts 27. 23. *The Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve*; that passage also, 2 Cor. 5. 14. is very observable. *The love of Christ constraineth us*, &c. Why art thou so painful a Minister *Paul*? why *knowest thou no man after the flesh*, art not led by carnal interests, nor affections: ar so busie and diligent, as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? (faith be) love will not let me rest, if I would be lazy, or carnal, or fold my hands to sleep; the love of Christ doth always sound that in my ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but unto him that died for me: *Now to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore*, we give praise.

FINIS.